

CHAPTER 2: GOVERNANCE

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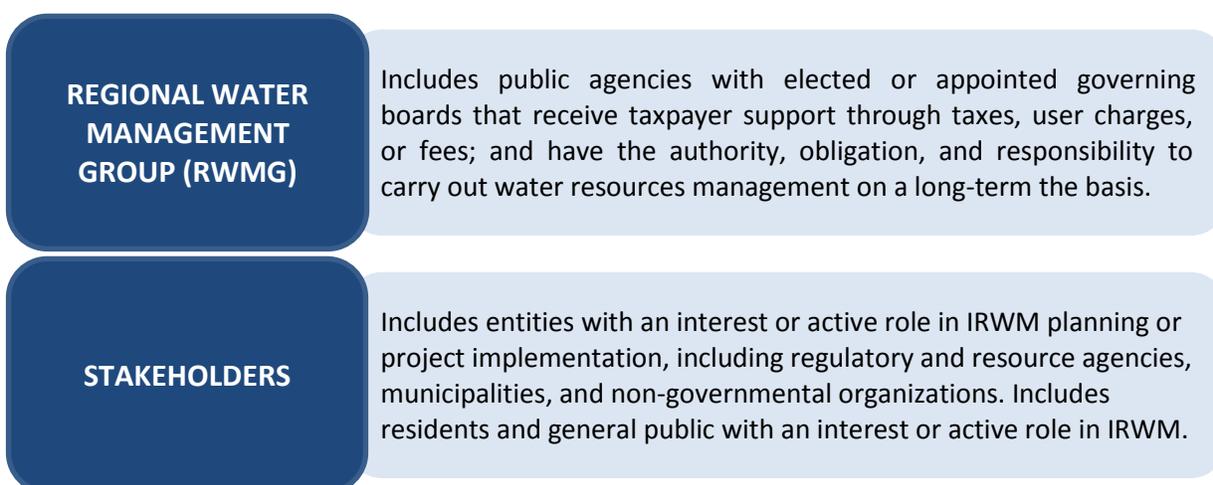
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2.1 SANTA CRUZ IRWM GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) includes the agencies responsible for development and implementation of the Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan. The RWMG is organized according to the California Water Code, but has its origins in the region's long history of collaborative watershed planning efforts.

For the Santa Cruz IRWM program, the RWMG consists of nine local agencies with statutory authority over water management and related resources. In addition, the IRWM program provides opportunity and encourages the participation and engagement of interested stakeholders throughout the Santa Cruz IRWM Region (and beyond). Stakeholders include regulatory and resource agencies, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, business and community groups, and citizens who may otherwise have an interest in IRWM planning and project implementation. The RWMG and Stakeholders are broadly defined as follows:



The following sections describe these various levels of participation within the Santa Cruz IRWM planning process - the RWMG, Steering Committee, Regional Water Management Foundation, and Stakeholders - and the ways in which the Santa Cruz IRWM governance operates to ensure effective implementation of the ongoing IRWM program.

2.1.1 SANTA CRUZ REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP

The makeup of the Santa Cruz RWMG is defined by §10539 of the California Water Code:

“RWMG means a group in which three or more local agencies, at least two of which have statutory authority over water supply or water management, as well as those other persons who may be necessary for the development and implementation of a plan that meets the [IRWM] requirements ... participate by means of a joint powers agreement, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or other written agreement, as appropriate, that is approved by the governing bodies of those local agencies.” (CWC §10539)

RWMG eligibility is defined through a set of criteria that includes:

1. Authority, obligation, and responsibility to carry out water resources management within the Region’s IRWM boundary; and
2. Public agencies with elected or appointed Boards; and
3. Receive support from public funds; and
4. Signatory to the IRWM Memorandum of Agreement.

The purpose of these criteria is to ensure that the RWMG consists of public agencies with a civic responsibility for long-term resources management and public accountability. As the IRWM Plan is expanded, additional agencies that meet these criteria may join this partnership. RWMG members are committed to:

- Establishing and fostering relationships with regional, state, and local governments, individuals, and other interested organizations to develop and implement management practices to preserve and protect Santa Cruz County water resources.
- Undertaking cooperative research and resource management initiatives that are regional in scope and disseminate information resulting from these activities.
- Producing and sharing relevant informational materials among the RWMG; particularly monitoring data information useful in assessing plan effectiveness.
- Recommending to the respective governing boards actions necessary to successfully develop and implement the IRWM Plan.
- Sponsoring appropriate stakeholder projects, and acting as an administrative and fiscal agent for those projects in the event they receive IRWM funding.
- Establishing goals and objectives for the Santa Cruz IRWM.
- Contributing the personnel and financial resources necessary to develop and implement the IRWM Plan proportional to their potential benefit.

Nine agencies have signed a Memorandum of Agreement to participate in the RWMG. They include:

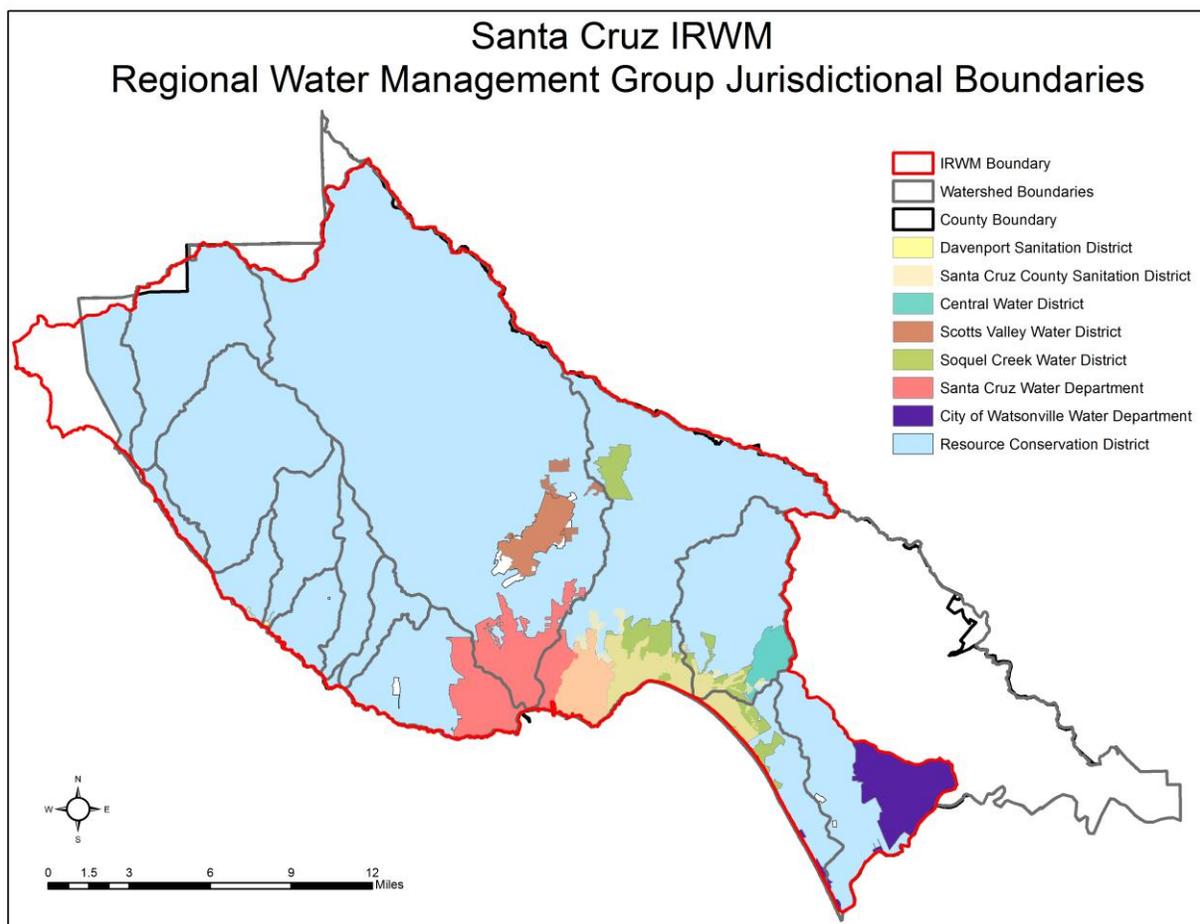
- Central Water District
- City of Santa Cruz
- City of Watsonville
- County of Santa Cruz
- Santa Cruz County Sanitation District
- Davenport County Sanitation District
- Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
- Scotts Valley Water District
- Soquel Creek Water District

The functional responsibilities of each RWMG member are outlined in the table below, and briefly described.

Table 2 - 1 RWMG Members and Areas of Functional Responsibility

Regional Water Management Group	Primary Functional Area Responsibilities			
	Water Supply	Water Quality	Watershed Resources	Flood / Stormwater Management
Central Water District	✓			
City of Santa Cruz	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Watsonville	✓	✓	✓	✓
County of Santa Cruz	✓	✓	✓	✓
County Sanitation District		✓		
Davenport County Sanitation District	✓	✓		
Resource Conservation District		✓	✓	
Scotts Valley Water District	✓			
Soquel Creek Water District	✓			

Figure 2-1 Jurisdictional Boundaries



Central Water District

The Central Water District has a five square mile service area in the rural area of Aptos. The District serves a population of approximately 2,700 people through about 840 connections, all of which are residential with the exception of seven commercial and 16 irrigation and public facilities. The District has two intertie connections with the Soquel Creek Water District for line flushing and limited assistance during emergencies. The District relies on groundwater from the Aromas Red Sands and Purisima aquifers for supply.

City of Santa Cruz

The City of Santa Cruz Water Department (SCWD) serves a 20 square mile area that extends from the agricultural lands west of the City to 41st Avenue in the City of Capitola. The service area includes the developed portion of UC Santa Cruz campus, Live Oak, Pasatiempo, and some other unincorporated areas surrounding the City. The City serves water to approximately 91,000 customers through over 24,000 connections, of which 88 percent are residential.

The City's Water Resources Management Section is responsible for the drinking water source protection, environmental regulatory compliance, and general natural resource management work that is an important part of the delivery of clean drinking water to City customers. Along with other

responsibilities, Resource Management staff provide environmental review and compliance support for the Department; conduct biological and hydrologic surveys, including drinking water source stream gaging and anadromous fishery habitat typing and population assessments; work on the Department's Habitat Conservation Plan; manage watershed lands; develop drinking water source assessments; and perform outreach and education with drinking water source watershed stakeholders.

In addition to acting as a water supply agency, the City performs several other water resources-related functions. The City maintains 7 miles of underground stormwater pipelines, 8 miles of surface storm ditches, 1 pump station, approximately 1,500 catch basins and 125 outfalls. The City also maintains the US Army Corps of Engineers levee system on the lower San Lorenzo River, which is approximately 3 miles long with 5 pump stations. The City's operations and maintenance program for the flood control facilities on the San Lorenzo River includes removal of sand and silt from the channels of the river and Branciforte Creek; maintenance of pumps, gates and levees; and removal of weeds and growth in drainage ditches and catch basins. As a best management practice, the City conducts routine street sweeping and regularly cleans the storm drain pipeline system, among other activities.

The City of Santa Cruz wastewater collection system serves approximately 15,000 connections and operates the wastewater treatment facility, which serves the City as well as the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District, CSA 10 and UC Santa Cruz. Fifty percent of the wastewater treated at the plant is generated within the City. The effluent is treated to a secondary level and disposed of through a deep ocean outfall constructed in 1980 and shared with the City of Scotts Valley. Approximately 150 acre-feet per year of treated water is retained for use at the treatment plant. The collection system includes 23 lift stations with a total capacity of 10.6 million gallons per day.

County of Santa Cruz

Although it does not have a centralized water supply agency, the County of Santa Cruz has historically coordinated countywide water management efforts through long-range water supply planning, watershed management programs, and development and implementation of general plan policies and programs for water resource protection and management. Current efforts focus on monitoring, investigation, planning, policy development, and management activities in the areas of water quality protection, erosion control, habitat restoration, stormwater management, and flood management. Efforts are being made to expand programs in the areas of water supply planning and comprehensive management. County water resource management programs are presently carried out in three departments: Planning, Public Works, and the Environmental Health Services Division of the Health Services Agency, with overall coordination by Environmental Health. Areas of responsibility with regard to water resources are described below.

Environmental Health Services (EHS), a division of the Health Services Agency, is responsible for coordinating the County's water resource management efforts. EHS acts as the administrative lead for the IRWM program efforts. EHS staff monitors bacteria, nitrate, and runoff at ocean beaches, coastal lagoons, streams, and storm drains. Staff maintain a database on streamflow and water quality, oversee hazardous materials facilities operations and cleanups, oversee 130 small water systems, regulate installation of new wells, ensure adequate water supply for new development using individual water systems, and oversee onsite wastewater treatment systems. EHS has oversight of water conservation, groundwater supply, and groundwater recharge programs and provides staff support to the County Water Advisory Commission and the County Fish and Game Advisory Commission. Additionally, EHS participates in regional monitoring efforts conducted by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary,

the Regional Water Quality Control Board and others. EHS reviews water rights applications and promotes stream habitat improvement projects. EHS also conducts a large woody material management program, and provides oversight and management of a countywide fish monitoring program. The Planning Department provides environmental review of all projects, and oversight of development activities such as grading, clearing, building, quarries, erosion control, and riparian corridor disturbance. The department develops and implements general plan policies and programs, and provides code compliance review and correction of erosion problems, riparian corridor impacts, and other illegal damage to environmental resources.

Public Works is responsible for the following areas of water resource management: compliance monitoring for sewage discharge requirements and industrial waste dischargers; maintenance and upgrade of sewage collection systems and small plants; operation of the Household Hazardous Waste Program; maintenance, improvement, and operation of drainage facilities, including silt and grease traps, flood control channels, and sloughs; maintenance and improvement of roads, including drainage and erosion control features; assessment and repair of road-related sediment sources and conditions for fish passage; operation of ALERT Flood Warning system for key watersheds; coordination and implementation of the stormwater management program; and groundwater monitoring around County landfills.

Santa Cruz County Sanitation District

The Santa Cruz County Sanitation District provides wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services for the City of Capitola and the unincorporated communities of Aptos, Soquel, and Live Oak. The District also serves Harbor High School, a satellite medical center, and the Port District that are within the City of Santa Cruz and outside the District's boundary. The District has treatment capacity rights of 8 million gallons per day at the City of Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Plant. The District currently maintains over 31,000 connections. Sewage is transported from the Lode Street facility near Capitola to the wastewater treatment plant at Neary Lagoon, which is owned and operated by the City of Santa Cruz. The District administers, maintains, and improves sanitary sewer facilities. Staffing is provided by the Santa Cruz County Public Works Department. Sanitation personnel in Public Works also provide service to Davenport, Freedom, Place de Mer, Sand Dollar Beach, Boulder Creek Country Club, Rolling Woods, and Trestle Beach.

Davenport County Sanitation District

The Davenport Sanitation District is a public agency providing clean drinking water and sewage collection, treatment, and disposal services to the economically disadvantaged community (DAC) of Davenport, located in northern Santa Cruz County. There are currently 89 sanitary sewer connections and 108 water service connections, serving a population of approximately 500. The district operates and maintains 3 miles of gravity lines, 1.3 miles of force main, and 3 pump stations. The District provides collection and treatment services as well as recycled water. Recently, the District received state grants to update drinking water distribution lines and construct a new drinking water treatment plant and storage facilities. The District is managed by the County Department of Public Works.

Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

The mission of the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD) is to help people protect, conserve, and restore natural resources through information, education, and technical assistance programs. The RCD provides a broad range of services related to soil and water conservation throughout Santa Cruz County. The RCD operates pursuant to the Resource Conservation District Act; it is a public

resource agency but does not have any regulatory or enforcement authority. The RCD leverages available technical, financial, and educational resources to meet the needs of local land users within three primary areas of service¹:

Agricultural Community: The RCD continues to serve the agricultural community as it has since the District's formation. Through a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the RCD offers the services of NRCS Conservationists to assist agricultural landowners with land management issues, including irrigation, fertilizer management, soil development, erosion control, crop cover, etc. The RCD places a high priority on issues and work related to the protection of prime and important farmland within Santa Cruz County.

Erosion Control and Sedimentation: The RCD prioritizes controlling accelerated erosion and sedimentation from human activities, including the following: rural roads, inadequate drainage, major land use changes, and erosion and reactivation of chronic landslide masses from landslides induced by human activities as well as natural events. To address these issues the RCD offers conservation assistance to road associations, timberland owners, livestock owners, environmental organizations, government resource agencies, and the general public through conferences, workshops, and demonstrations.

Watershed Management: Soil and water conservation is an important element of watershed planning and management. Through the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP) the RCD is directly involved in a number of watershed management initiatives. The RCD assists watershed groups and landowners with dissemination of conservation information and implementation of on-the-ground resource enhancement projects, including managing grant programs. In conjunction with the NRCS, the RCD offers permit coordination services through the Santa Cruz Countywide Permit Coordination Program.

Scotts Valley Water District

The Scotts Valley Water District (SVWD) service area encompasses six square miles, including most of the City of Scotts Valley and unincorporated areas to the north. The District currently serves approximately 10,000 customers through nearly 4,000 connections, of which 93 percent are residential. The District is dependent on groundwater. Water supply is obtained from three water-bearing formations within the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin: the Santa Margarita Sandstone, and the Lompico and Butano formations. The District has an emergency intertie with the San Lorenzo Valley Water District and plans to increase the size of the connection to enhance mutual aid opportunities in the future. In 2011, the District delivered approximately 200 acre-feet of recycled water from the City of Scotts Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Soquel Creek Water District

The Soquel Creek Water District (SqCWD) serves an area of 14 square miles that includes portions of the City of Capitola as well as the unincorporated areas of Soquel, Aptos, Seacliff, Rio Del Mar, Seascape, La Selva Beach, and Canon del Sol. The District serves over 37,000 customers through approximately 15,000 connections with 94 percent of those being residential. The District is entirely dependent on groundwater from two aquifers – the Purisima Formation (62 percent of its supply) and the Aromas Red Sands aquifer (38 percent of supply).

¹Santa Cruz County Local Agency Formation Commission. 2005. Countywide Service Review

City of Watsonville

The City of Watsonville is within an area of overlap for the Santa Cruz IRWM and Pajaro IRWM planning regions. As a water supply agency, the City has approximately 14,000 service connections, of which 85 percent are residential. The City of Watsonville provides domestic water services in much of the Pajaro Valley that lies within Santa Cruz County, from Pajaro Dunes to Corralitos. Some new developments that lie outside the city limits also will be served if they meet the City's minimum density requirements and include affordable housing. The majority of the City's water supply is obtained from the Aromas Red Sands aquifer with the balance coming from surface water. The City's potable water distribution system is comprised of 152 miles of pipeline, eight reservoirs or water storage facilities, and 10 pumping stations.

The City of Watsonville implements a water conservation program, and has developed a recycled wastewater project in conjunction with the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency to serve agricultural users to reduce groundwater pumping in the coastal area. The City also operates a wastewater treatment plant that treats approximately 7 million gallons of wastewater per day to secondary standards and discharges to the ocean. The City has implemented a Storm Water Management Program since 2003, and enforces a series of best management practices and associated measurable goals to meet the six minimum control measures identified in the Phase II NPDES Program. A Trails Master Plan has recently been developed that proposes a system of footpaths, bicycle paths, point access for disabled users, and tie-ins to commercial development.

Watsonville also provides wastewater collection services within the City's boundaries. The City's treatment facility located on Panabaker Lane treats wastewater from the City as well as from the Salsipuedes Sanitary District, the Freedom County Sanitation District, and the Pajaro County Sanitary District located in northern Monterey County. Wastewater is treated to the tertiary level. Treated effluent is discharged through an ocean outfall over a mile offshore. The City's wastewater system has 12 lift stations with a combined capacity of 2.4 million gallons per day.

2.1.2 IRWM STEERING COMMITTEE

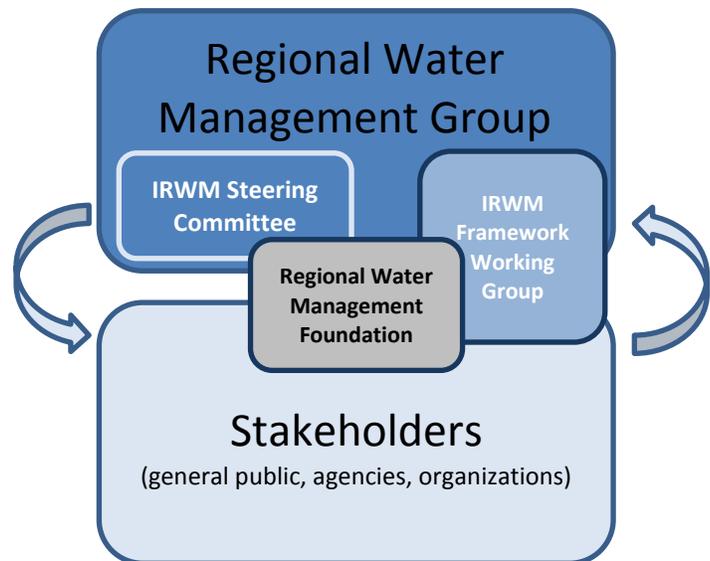
The IRWM Steering Committee is an active, decision-making sub-group of the RWMG that is designed to be broadly representative of the RWMG yet small enough to effectively make decisions in a timely manner. The Steering Committee is composed of three members selected from the RWMG, and appointed to ensure representation for each of the four functional areas – water supply, water quality, watershed resources, and flood and stormwater management. The Steering Committee currently consists of the County Water Resources division director, the executive director of the Resource Conservation District, and the manager of one of the water supply agencies.

The Steering Committee meets on a regular basis (currently monthly) to discuss IRWM administration and to coordinate efforts as needed. The RWMG representatives on the Steering Committee are appointed by majority vote of the RWMG (based on one vote per agency). Steering Committee members serve on the Committee for as long as they choose, unless they are voted out by the RWMG (by majority vote).

The Steering Committee provides information and consults with the RWMG, and performs the following functions on behalf of the RWMG:

- guides IRWM Plan implementation;
- acts as a liaison to the RWMF and all stakeholders, including state agencies, elected officials, and the public;
- coordinates funding proposals;
- promotes project integration of multi-benefit projects;
- ensures stakeholder participation; and,
- tends to administrative matters concerning IRWM efforts.

Figure 2- 2 Santa Cruz IRWM Participatory Diagram



2.1.3 REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT FOUNDATION

The Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF) was created in 2007 to serve an administrative role for the first IRWM Implementation grant awarded to the region. The RWMF is a separate 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization established as a subsidiary of the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County. In addition to serving as the fiscal agent, the RWMF also provides ongoing management and administration for the IRWM grants awarded to the region. The RWMF acts as a central hub and provides technical expertise for consolidation of items for review, reporting, invoicing, and inter-agency coordination, as well as an interface between the RWMG and the funding state agency.

The RWMF is guided by a seven-member Board of Directors consisting of four members appointed by the Community Foundation and the three members of the IRWM Steering Committee. The RWMF actions are guided by a set of bylaws adopted in 2007, which establish a process for meetings, decision making, and membership, among other information. The Board typically meets on a quarterly basis, more frequently as needed.

The RWMF has served as grantee for the three IRWM grant awarded to the region. As grantee, the RWMF has provided the grant administration and coordinated the reporting, invoicing, and inter-agency coordination. The RWMF has played this role on all of the IRWM grants awarded to the region, which includes:

- Proposition 50 IRWM Implementation Grant \$12.5m from the State Water Board (2008 - 2013)
- Proposition 84 IRWM Planning Grant \$999,750 from DWR (2011 - 2014)
- Proposition 84 IRWM DAC Outreach Pilot Project Grant \$100,000 from DWR (2011 - 2014)
- The RWMF also provides similar services to some of the RWMG agencies on efforts outside the IRWM program, such as the State Water Board's Stormwater Grant Program.

2.1.4 STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders participate in and contribute to IRWM planning and implementation activities, but do not have the voting rights of RWMG members. Stakeholders include regulatory and resource government agencies, municipalities, local districts, nonprofit environmental organizations, community organizations, environmental and social justice organizations, academic institutions, agricultural representatives, Native American tribes, neighboring IRWM regions, and private citizens, among others. Stakeholders' roles vary from issuing permits for IRWM projects, to acting as sub-grantees to RWMG members for the implementation of IRWM projects, to providing direct input into IRWM Plan milestones, such as goals and objectives, to simply having a general interest in IRWM planning activities. Stakeholders have the opportunity for participation or input in Plan development and specific projects through public meetings, stakeholder workshops, and project solicitations. They may also become involved at the project implementation stage as technical advisors or in the project permitting process.

Stakeholders in the Santa Cruz IRWM planning process include, but are not limited to, those listed below:

- Action Pajaro Valley
- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Ohlone/
Costanoan Indians
- Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance
- Bay Area IRWM Region
- Bureau of Land Management
- CA Department of Fish and Wildlife
- CA Department of Parks and Recreation
- CA Department of Water Resources
- CAL FIRE
- Cal Poly Swanton Ranch
- California Coastal Commission
- California Coastal Conservancy
- Center for Integrated Water Research
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality
Control Board
- City of Capitola
- City of Scotts Valley
- Coastal Watershed Council
- Ecology Action
- Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
- Friends of Pajaro Dunes
- Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
- Monterey Bay Channel Keeper
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service
- O'Neill Sea Odyssey
- Pajaro Valley IRWM Group
- Regional Water Management Foundation
- San Lorenzo Valley Water District
- San Lorenzo Valley Women's Club
- Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau
- Santa Cruz Port District
- Save Our Shores
- Scotts Creek Watershed Council
- Sierra Club
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Surfrider Foundation
- The Otter Project
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- UC Santa Cruz
- Watsonville Wetlands Watch

2.1.5 FUTURE IRWM COLLABORATION AND NEW PARTNERSHIPS

The Steering Committee serves a lead role in identifying and cultivating new partnerships, working towards project integration, and encouraging participation in the IRWM process. The Steering Committee's outreach activities are detailed in Chapter 14, Stakeholder Involvement. Additional

agencies and organizations are anticipated to become involved as the Santa Cruz IRWM efforts expand and new collaborations develop.

2.2 GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS

2.2.1 MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Each of the RWMG members is signatory to the *Memorandum of Agreement for the Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management Plan* (MOA) (Appendix A). The MOA establishes the institutional framework for the joint efforts of the participating agencies in developing, implementing, and updating the IRWM Plan. The initial Santa Cruz IRWM MOA was developed and signed in 2006 by six participating agencies and entities, the term of which carried through until 2010. In 2011, the MOA was updated and renewed, and signed by nine partner agencies. The MOA establishes the mutual understandings of the signatories and defines procedures and roles in regard to the following:

- Purpose
- Scope of the IRWM Plan
- Decision-making process
- Commitment of personnel and financial resources
- Reports and communications
- Role of the Steering Committee
- Levels of engagement (RWMG members and Stakeholders)
- Eligible project types
- Process for collaboration and new partnerships
- Interim and formal Plan amendments
- Project list updates

2.2.2 EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

The Steering Committee is tasked with principal duty of guiding IRWM activities in the Region, including decision making regarding coordination, planning, and implementation. Decisions are by consensus through an interactive process that seeks the consent of all participants. The process has proven effective for the RWMG in the successful application and completion of IRWM Implementation and Planning grants, regional technical planning studies, and collaboration on related resources stewardship issues. On matters of significance to the larger RWMG (e.g., deciding to apply for funding opportunities), the Steering Committee consults with the full RWMG. All Steering Committee decisions with material financial implications are ratified by a majority vote of the full RWMG. The Steering Committee also guides the formation of committees or working groups composed of representatives from the RWMG.

2.2.3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Internal Communications

Communication within the RWMG is conducted through a variety of avenues including meetings, email, website, presentations, and workshops. The Steering Committee meets on an approximately monthly

basis. The Steering Committee and staff schedule meetings with the full RWMG on an as-needed basis, typically multiple times each year. Typically, these meetings occur in response to issues with particular effect upon the RWMG. In general, meetings will be scheduled to address such concerns as:

- Updates to the MOA
- Revised or updated IRWM guidelines
- Funding solicitations
- Change in Steering Committee membership
- IRWM project solicitation
- Updates to the IRWM Plan

Website updates, listserv, and informal emails and phone calls may also be used to coordinate among RWMG members, depending on the nature of the subject matter.

External Communications

The Santa Cruz IRWM website is updated on a frequent basis and serves to inform the general public about IRWM efforts, including: information on IRWM projects and planning documents; opportunities for public engagement through meetings and workshops; information on funding opportunities; a document library; information and materials from upcoming and recent meetings; a sign-up for email updates; contact information on the IRWM program staff; and news and information on how to submit a project to be considered for inclusion in the IRWM Plan. The email distribution listserv is also used to inform stakeholders of important announcements, such as planning or implementation milestones, news and events, meetings and workshops, funding opportunities, and project solicitations. See below for a more detailed description of the Region's public outreach and involvement process.

The Santa Cruz IRWM Region participates in the statewide Roundtable of Regions, a consortium of IRWM regions that shares IRWM-related information amongst the participating regions as well as routinely communicates with the Department of Water Resources staff to exchange information and perspectives on IRWM program and matters broadly pertaining to IRWM functionality and funding. The Santa Cruz Region also coordinates with the five other IRWM regions in the Central Coast funding area, with regional representatives participating in meetings and conference calls to exchange information on topics such as the status of planning and implementation activities, emerging issues, opportunities for interregional collaboration, and funding.

2.3 HOW THE GOVERNANCE ENSURES AN OPEN, BALANCED, AND COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The following sections describe how the Santa Cruz governance structure functions to ensure an effective, open, balanced, and inclusive process that achieves the goals and objectives described in this Plan.

SANTA CRUZ INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT

IRWM ABOUT PLAN UPDATE 2014 PROJECTS RESOURCES CONTACT

The Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program provides a framework for local stakeholders to manage this region's water and water-related resources. The Santa Cruz IRWM Plan was developed in response to California's IRWM planning initiative to promote an informed, locally-driven, and consensus-based approach to water resources management.

The IRWM Plan includes strategies for developing and implementing policies and projects to ensure sustainable water use, reliable water supply, better water quality, improved flood protection and stormwater management, and environmental stewardship. [Find out more](#)

IRWM Plan Update Nearing Completion
This effort is led by the County of Santa Cruz in conjunction with the local agencies, stakeholders and in partnership with the Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF).
Remain current in addressing region's challenges

- Review and update goals and objectives
- Identify water resource management strategies
- Complete technical studies
- Update list of projects from stakeholders

Meet the state's new IRWM Plan standards

- Climate change response actions
- Relation of local water planning and land use planning

This work is funded in part through a competitive grant awarded by the Department of Water Resources and with local agency funds. The Plan will be completed in summer 2014.

2014 IRWM Project Solicitation
The 2014 IRWM Plan project submission period is closed. 77

Stakeholder Meetings and Workshops

Coming Up ...
County Water Advisory Commission – Special Meeting
Presentation of the IRWM Plan for the Santa Cruz Region
July 16, 2014, Wednesday, 4:00pm - 6:00pm
Location: County Health Center at 1080 Emeline, Santa Cruz Health Services - Large Auditorium
[Agenda \(PDF\)](#)

Past Meetings
April 24, 2014, Thursday, 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Location: Simpkins Family Swim Center, Santa Cruz
IRWM Meeting - Drought Projects Solicitation
[Presentation \(PDF\)](#)

2.3.1 COLLABORATIVE PROCESS USED TO ESTABLISH PLAN OBJECTIVES

IRWM Plan objectives were initially developed for the 2005 Northern Santa Cruz IRWM Plan, derived from numerous water resource and watershed planning documents. Subsequently, the RWMG, led by the Steering Committee, developed an overarching vision for the Santa Cruz IRWM Plan and refined the goals and objectives as part of the 2009 Regional Acceptance Process.

In 2012, as part of the Plan Update, the vision, goals, and objectives were revised through a year-long planning process to ensure objective-based decision making and strategy prioritization for the IRWM Plan. This collaborative process was led by a working group of representatives from the RWMG and participating Stakeholders. This working group oversaw the development of objectives over approximately 12 months as part of a comprehensive effort to develop a conceptual framework for the Santa Cruz IRWM Plan (See Chapter 4 Goals and Objectives). The purpose of that effort was to build off of prior work on the goals and objectives in a way that directly linked strategy implementation with achievement of objectives and the indicators by which progress towards achievement could be measured. The draft objectives were presented to the RWMG in 2012 as well as to stakeholders at a public workshop on August 16, 2012, which provided an opportunity for oral and written comments. The draft goals and objectives were posted to the Santa Cruz IRWM website and brought to the RWMG for review and comment prior to their finalization.

2.3.2 BALANCED ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION

Most of the agencies and stakeholders in the region that have the responsibility for water management issues are members of the RWMG and these stakeholders have representation in the decision-making structure. The RWMG appoints three members of the RWMG to serve on the Steering Committee, ensuring balanced representation of the four functional areas (water supply, water quality, flood protection/stormwater management, and watershed and resource stewardship) in the RWMG's decision making. The governance structure supports additional participation in the IRWM planning process through working groups, stakeholder informational meetings and workshops, targeted outreach to DACs, and public outreach programs. Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the IRWM planning process with no requirement or expectation to contribute financially to the IRWM Plan.

2.3.3 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT PROCESSES

The RWMG engaged and will continue to engage interested stakeholders and provide opportunities for the general public to become informed and involved, and to provide feedback on IRWM efforts and Plan updates. Any interested stakeholder may participate in the Santa Cruz IRWM planning process by attending workshops, responding to calls for projects, commenting on the draft IRWM Plan, or simply by contacting the Steering Committee or staff. The Santa Cruz IRWM website is the primary mechanism for distributing information to the general public and posting upcoming events, planning efforts, implementation projects, and documents. The website includes a sign-up for email registration to receive emails on IRWM news and events. This email list-serve is one of the primary mechanisms for distributing information to stakeholders and RWMG members. Chapter 14 provides a more comprehensive description of Stakeholder Outreach and Involvement.

During the IRWM Plan update process, the RWMG encouraged participation from other water, agricultural, watershed, wetland, and environmental non-governmental and community-based

organizations, agencies, and special districts. In 2013-2014, the RWMG targeted involvement of DACs through DWR's DAC Outreach Pilot Project. The RWMG communicates through a website, meetings, workshops, email, local media, written correspondence and public announcements. The RWMG members regularly conduct outreach with their own boards, councils, commissions, constituents, and members through emails, newsletters, websites, and public meetings. The RWMG will continue to engage the community through established boards, advisory groups, meetings, and events, including:

- Elected and appointed agency boards and councils
- Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission
- City of Santa Cruz Water Commission
- Integrated Watershed Restoration Program Outreach
- Blue Circle Meetings
- SCWD2 Task Force – Outreach Program
- Santa Cruz Watershed Action Group (SWAG)
- Santa Margarita Basin Advisory Committee
- Municipal Stormwater Permit Outreach Program
- Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Alliance

As with the 2005 IRWM Plan, the 2014 IRWM Plan will be formally adopted by the RWMG through a public process that allows for comment on the Plan. A public workshop will be held, followed by adoption by each of the governing boards and then by the RWMG meeting as a whole. A template of the Resolution for Adoption is provided in Appendix B.

Figure 2 - 3 IRWM Plan 2014 Adoption Dates of RWMG

RWMG Entity	Anticipated Date of Adoption
City of Santa Cruz	7/22/2014
Soquel Creek Water District	8/12/2014
Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County	8/13/2014
Scotts Valley Water District	8/14/2014
Central Water District	8/19/2014
County of Santa Cruz	8/19/2014
Davenport Sanitation District	8/19/2014
Santa Cruz County Sanitation District	8/21/2014
City of Watsonville	8/26/2014
Regional Water Management Group	8/27/2014

2.4 COORDINATION WITH NEIGHBORING REGIONS

Representatives of the Santa Cruz RWMG participate in the Central Coast Funding Area workgroup conference calls and meetings, and keep an open dialogue between neighboring IRWM regions. The RWMG participates in neighboring IRWM Plans (particularly Pajaro), and coordinates on any projects

that overlap regional boundaries. The Santa Cruz Region is abutted on the south and east by the Pajaro Region including one area of overlap (Watsonville Sloughs); and to the north and east by the Bay Area IRWM Region.

2.4.1 COORDINATION WITH PAJARO REGION

The Pajaro IRWM effort, which covers all of the Pajaro River Watershed, including the portion within Santa Cruz County, is viewed as parallel and complementary. The Pajaro IRWM Plan primarily addresses issues of groundwater management, flooding, and water quality in the Watsonville Sloughs area, while the Santa Cruz County IRWM Plan addresses water quality protection and habitat restoration in the sloughs. Both Pajaro and Santa Cruz are within the Central Coast Hydrologic Region. Several Santa Cruz RWMG members also have projects in the Pajaro region, and the Santa Cruz RCD and County staff participate in the Stakeholder Advisory Committee of the Pajaro IRWM planning process. Coordination primarily occurs around overlapping projects and around projects in the Watsonville Sloughs. The two regions have many common stakeholders. Both regions participate in regular Central Coast IRWM coordination meetings and also in the Roundtable of Regions. The County Water Resources Division reviews and comments on both IRWM Plans. County and RCD staff as well as staff from the City of Watsonville attend both Regions' meetings. There is also some coordination and collaboration on grant funding outside of IRWM efforts.

2.4.2 COORDINATION WITH THE BAY AREA REGION

The Bay Area and Santa Cruz IRWM regions connect in rather remote geographic areas – in the upper Santa Cruz Mountains, and on the coast near Año Nuevo. The Bay Area IRWM Region is in RWQCB Region 2 (San Francisco Bay), and Santa Cruz is in Region 3 (Central Coast). The planning efforts are viewed as parallel and complementary, although there is limited interaction between water managers in these regions as the water resources are almost completely separate. Both regions participate in the Roundtable of Regions, and information is also shared through informal networks. There is also close coordination and collaboration between the RCD of Santa Cruz County and San Mateo County RCD.

2.5 COORDINATION WITH STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

Several different state and federal agencies are directly involved in the IRWM planning process. These agencies generally serve in an advisory role for the RWMG, and may participate or provide input in Plan development and project development through public meetings, stakeholder workshops, and project solicitations. They may also become involved at the project implementation stage as technical advisors or in the project permitting process. The following federal and state agencies currently participate in the Santa Cruz IRWM process:

- California Coastal Commission
- California Coastal Conservancy
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- California Department of Water Resources
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- NOAA Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
- NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

- State Water Resources Control Board
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

2.6 PROCESS FOR PLAN UPDATE AND AMENDMENT

This IRWM Plan is intended to be a living document to be updated as conditions change, new issues arise, new information becomes available, or as new projects need to be added. The process by which the update occurs depends on the nature of what is being updated, as described below. The intent of the various levels is to allow a streamlined process while ensuring adequate Plan oversight within the RWMG.

2.6.1 PROJECT LIST UPDATES

This Plan includes a list of projects submitted by the RWMG that were evaluated and included based upon each project's anticipated contribution towards meeting the goals and objectives of the IRWM Plan. To ensure the IRWM Plan is not a static document, but rather continues to be useful and to reflect current priorities, the list of projects will be periodically updated as projects are completed and as new priorities arise. Project list updates are also anticipated in advance of future state IRWM Program funding solicitations. The Steering Committee is tasked with coordinating updates, and will conduct a review of the Project List no less frequently than every five years, and as needed, initiate and coordinate a publicly announced solicitation for projects. Incorporation of new projects will not require the re-adoption of the Plan by the RWMG.

2.6.2 INFORMAL PLAN CHANGES

Minor changes to the Plan will be addressed through informal, interim amendments. The Steering Committee will have discretion to determine what constitutes a minor change, but such changes generally include organizational changes (e.g., adding RWMG members) or other administrative matters that do not necessitate a decision by the governing bodies of the RWMG. The IRWM Steering Committee will provide guidance and coordination of amendments. Staff will generally identify and complete minor IRWM Plan changes; however RWMG members may also present an amendment for consideration to the Steering Committee. In either case, the full RWMG will be informed of and provided an opportunity for input on proposed interim amendments, which will be posted on the website (SantaCruzIRWMP.org). The Steering Committee will ratify amendments by consensus; approved amendments will be posted on the website. Interim amendments will be incorporated into the IRWM Plan during the next formal Plan update.

2.6.3 FORMAL PLAN UPDATES

Formal updates reflect any significant changes to IRWM Plan including processes, organizational structure and governance, water management conditions, or goals and objectives. An IRWM Plan update is a time and resource intensive undertaking. DWR encourages IRWM regions to formally review, revise, and adopt the IRWM Plan no less frequently than every five years. The Santa Cruz IRWM region will strive to adhere to this recommended update frequency. The IRWM Steering Committee will

provide a leadership role in guiding and coordinating the formal IRWM Plan updates to ensure an inclusive and transparent decision-making process. Formal updates will include outreach efforts to RWMG partners and Stakeholders, including DACs, to ensure that interested entities have the opportunity to comment and participate in Plan development and implementation. Following completion of the IRWM Plan update, it is expected that it will be approved and adopted by all participating RWMG members, and formally adopted by all project proponents named in an IRWM grant application.

2.6.4 PUBLIC NOTICE OF PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION

A notice of intention to prepare the Plan, and then a notice of intention to adopt the Plan, was published in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* newspaper in accordance with §6066 of the Government Code. In 2014, each of the RWMG members have or will accept, approve, or adopt the Santa Cruz IRWM Plan through resolution by their governing boards or similar process according to their organizational protocol. Each project proponent named in an IRWM grant application will also be required to adopt the IRWM Plan in conjunction with the submittal of the application. On <<August 27, 2014>>, the Santa Cruz IRWM Plan was formally adopted by the RWMG in a public meeting of the RWMG governing board.

2.7 LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IRWM PLAN

The IRWM Plan is intended to be a living document that will be assessed and periodically updated to ensure it remains up to date as conditions change, projects are completed, and new projects and priorities arise. Following the adoption of the Santa Cruz IRWM Plan in 2014, implementation of the Plan will occur through the completion of the planning, technical studies, and implementation projects in the Plan by the project proponents. The goals, objectives, and strategies developed through development of the IRWM Plan and 2012 conceptual framework² established a process and metrics for evaluating progress toward attaining the regional goals and objectives over time. To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the IRWM Plan, the RWMG will monitor and periodically assess Plan implementation (see Chapter 9, Plan Performance and Monitoring).

The Santa Cruz IRWM program is anticipated to be a dynamic program that will continue to develop and evolve over time with assessments and future work conducted through an adaptive management approach. The current governance structure provides an effective and adaptive framework that will support IRWM Plan implementation into the future. The Steering Committee will continue to guide IRWM planning and implementation efforts, and will continue to meet on a regular, as-needed basis to:

- guide IRWM Plan implementation
- act as a liaison to the RWMG, DWR, RWMF, Stakeholders, other IRWM Regions
- identify funding opportunities and coordinate funding proposals
- promote project integration of multi-benefit projects
- ensure stakeholder participation
- tend to administrative matters concerning IRWM efforts

² 2ND NATURE, LLC., 2013, Santa Cruz IRWM Conceptual Framework

IRWM Plan activities and projects may be implemented with the benefit of funding through the IRWM program, but are equally likely to be implemented through alternative grant sources from the state or federal government, through private grant sources, or through funding from the agencies themselves. In the case of IRWM funding, the RWMF will serve as the fiscal sponsor and will be responsible for administering the grant to ensure that all contract terms are met. At the request of any RWMG member and approval of the Board, the RWMF may administer grants or other funding mechanisms outside of the IRWM program. Individual agencies or groups of agencies or will be responsible for actual implementation of the projects.

Since 2005, the RWMG members have consistently shared costs for IRWM grant applications and related IRWM activities. Beginning in 2013, the RWMG made annual contributions to the RWMF for IRWM support and coordination services. The RWMF is anticipated to continue to serve as the fiscal sponsor and provide grant administration and coordination services on IRWM grants.

As the Santa Cruz IRWM planning process continues into the future, the Steering Committee will periodically solicit projects from the RWMG and Stakeholders to include in the IRWM Plan. The RWMG will continue to utilize a public website (SantaCruzIRWMP.org) to disseminate news and information about IRWM efforts including meeting and workshop announcements, project descriptions and information, maps, project final reports, technical studies, grant related reporting, and other tools to share information and promote collaboration.