

Vision

California has healthy, resilient watersheds and reliable and secure water resources and management systems. Public health, safety, and quality of life in rural, suburban, and urban communities are significantly improved as a result of advancements in IWM. The water system provides the certainty needed for quality of life, sustainable economic growth, business vitality, and agricultural productivity. California’s unique biological diversity, ecological values, and cultural heritage are protected and have substantially recovered.

Mission

Updating the CWP provides federal, State, tribal, regional, and local governments and organizations with a continuous planning forum to collaboratively:

- Recommend strategic goals, objectives, and near-term and long-term actions that would conserve, manage, develop, and sustain California’s watersheds, water resources, and management systems.
- Prepare response plans for floods, droughts, and catastrophic events that would threaten water resources and management systems, the environment, and property, as well as the health, welfare, and livelihood of the people of California.
- Evaluate current and future watershed and water conditions, challenges, and opportunities.

Goals

1. California’s water supplies are adequate, reliable, secure, affordable, sustainable, and of suitable quality for beneficial uses to protect, preserve, and enhance watersheds, communities, cultural resources and practices, environmental and agricultural resources, and recreation.
2. State government supports integrated water resources planning and management through leadership, oversight, and public funding.
3. Regional and interregional partnerships play a pivotal role in California water resources planning, water management for sustainable water use and resources, and increasing regional self-reliance.
4. Water resource and land use planners make informed and collaborative decisions and implement integrated actions to increase water supply reliability, use water more efficiently, protect water quality, improve flood protection, promote environmental stewardship, and ensure environmental justice and public access to water bodies, in light of drivers of change and catastrophic events.
5. California is preparing for climate uncertainty by developing adaptation strategies and investing in a diverse set of actions that reduce the risk and consequences posed by climate change, which make the system more resilient to change and increase the sustainability of water and flood management systems and the ecosystems they depend on.
6. Integrated flood management, as a part of IWM, increases flood protection, improves preparedness and emergency response, enhances floodplain ecosystems, and promotes sustainable flood management systems.
7. The benefits and consequences of water decisions and access to State government resources are equitable across all communities.

Guiding Principles

1. Manage California’s water resources and management systems with ecosystem health and water supply and quality reliability as equal goals, with full consideration of public trust uses. Healthy, functioning ecosystems and reliable, quality water supplies are primary and equal goals for water management to help sustain water resources and management systems. Protect public trust uses whenever feasible, and consider public trust values in the planning and allocation of water resources. State government protects the public’s rights to commerce, navigation, fisheries, recreation, ecological preservation, and related beneficial uses, including those of its Native American tribes and other communities that depend on these resources for subsistence and cultural practices.
2. Use a broad, stakeholder-based, long-view perspective for water management. Promote multi-objective planning with a regional focus, and coordinate local, regional, interregional, and statewide initiatives. Recognize distinct regional problems, resources, assets, and priorities. Emphasize long-term planning (30- to 50-year horizon) while identifying near-term actions needed to achieve the plan.
3. Promote sustainable resource management on a watershed basis. Wisely use natural resources to ensure their availability for future generations. Promote activities with the greatest multiple benefits regionally and statewide. Consider the interrelationship between water supplies, water conservation, water quality, water infrastructure, flood protection, energy, recreation, land use, economic prosperity, and environmental stewardship on a watershed or ecosystem basis.
4. Increase system flexibility and resiliency. Evaluate and implement strategies that reduce the impacts of droughts and floods in the region. In California, drought contingency planning and integrated flood management are important components of regional water planning.
5. Increase regional self-reliance. Implement resource management strategies that reduce dependence on long-term imports of water from other hydrologic regions for meeting additional future water demands and during times of limited supply, such as a drought or interrupted supply after a catastrophic event (e.g., an earthquake or fire). Reduce reliance on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) in meeting California’s future water demands. Increase regional self-reliance for water by investing in water use efficiency, water recycling, advanced water technologies, local and regional water-supply projects, improved regional coordination of local and regional water supplies, and other strategies. As part of a diverse water portfolio, short-term water transfers between regions that are environmentally, economically, and socially sound can also help increase regional self-reliance overall.
6. Determine values for economic, environmental, and social benefits; costs; and tradeoffs so as to base investment decisions on sustainability indicators. Evaluate programs and projects recognizing economic growth, environmental quality, social equity, and sustainability as coequal objectives. When comparing alternatives, determine the value of potential economic, environmental, and social benefits; beneficiaries; costs; and tradeoffs. Include a plan that avoids, minimizes, and mitigates for adverse impacts.
7. Incorporate future variability, uncertainties, and risk in the decision-making process. Use multiple future scenarios to consider drivers of change and emerging conditions, such as population growth and climate change, when making planning, management, and policy decisions.
8. Apply California’s water rights laws, including the longstanding constitutional principles of reasonable use and public trust, as the foundation for public policy-making, planning, and management decisions on California water resources. Recognize that certain natural resources — including water, tides, and submerged lands; the beds and banks of navigable rivers; and fish and wildlife resources — are owned by the public and held in trust for present and future generations of Californians. Native American tribes also depend on these natural resources for subsistence and cultural heritage. Effectively applying existing water rights laws and the twin principles of reasonable use and public trust will provide water for future generations while protecting ecosystem values.
9. Promote environmental justice — the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes. Include meaningful community participation in decision-making for State-sponsored or public-funded resource management projects, and consider such factors as community demographics, potential or actual adverse health or environmental impacts, and benefits and burdens of the project on stakeholder groups.
10. Use science, best data, and local and traditional ecological knowledge in a transparent and documented process. When appropriate and possible, use data, information, planning methods, and analytical techniques that have undergone scientific review.

Objective 1 — Strengthen Integrated Regional Water Management Planning

Strengthen integrated regional water management planning to improve regional self-reliance, and maintain and enhance regional water management partnerships.

Objective 2 — Use and Reuse Water More Efficiently

Use water more efficiently with significantly greater water conservation, recycling, and reuse to help meet future water demands and adapt to climate change.

Objective 3 — Expand Conjunctive Management of Multiple Supplies

Advance and expand conjunctive management of multiple water supply sources with existing and new surface and groundwater storage to prepare for future droughts, floods, and climate change.

Objective 4 — Protect and Restore Surface Water and Groundwater Quality

Protect and restore surface water and groundwater quality to safeguard public and environmental health and secure California's water supplies for beneficial uses.

Objective 5 — Practice Environmental Stewardship

Practice, promote, improve, and expand environmental stewardship to protect biological diversity and sustain natural water and flood management systems in watersheds, on floodplains, and in aquatic habitats.

Objective 6 — Improve Flood Management Using an Integrated Water Management Approach

Promote and practice flood management that reduces flood risk to people and property and maintains and enhances natural floodplain functions using an IWM approach. An IWM approach utilizes a systemwide perspective and considers all aspects of water management, including public safety and emergency management, environmental sustainability, and economic stability (which includes water supply reliability, water quality, and system and community resiliency).

Objective 7 — Manage the Delta to Achieve the Coequal Goals for California

Manage the Delta as both a critically important hub of the California water system and as California's most valuable estuary and wetland ecosystem. Achieve the two coequal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place.

Objective 8 — Prepare Prevention, Response, and Recovery Plans

Prepare prevention, response, and recovery plans for floods, droughts, and catastrophic events to help residents and communities, particularly disadvantaged communities, make decisions that reduce the consequences and recovery time of these events when they occur.

Objective 9 — Reduce the Carbon Footprint of Water Systems and Water Uses

Reduce the carbon footprint of water and wastewater management systems by implementing the water-related strategies in the AB 32 Scoping Plan to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

Objective 10 — Improve Data, Analysis, and Decision-Support Tools

Improve and expand data monitoring, management, analysis, and decision-support tools to advance IWM, in light of demographic, climate, and institutional uncertainties.

Objective 11 — Invest in Water Technology and Science

Identify, develop, and prioritize research needs for new technologies; advance development and implementation of existing and emerging tools, technologies and innovations; and encourage partnerships in water-related technology and science to promote more efficient, effective, and sustainable water resources management and a better scientific understanding of California's water-related systems.

Objective 12 — Improve Tribal/State Relations and Natural Resources Management

Develop relationships with California Native American Tribes that acknowledges and respects their inherent rights to exercise sovereign authority and ensure that they are incorporated into planning and water resources decision-making processes in a manner that is consistent with their sovereign status.

Objective 13 — Ensure Equitable Distribution of Benefits

Increase the voice of small and disadvantaged communities in State processes and programs to achieve fair and equitable distribution of benefits. Provide access to safe drinking water and wastewater treatment for all California communities and ensure programs and policies address the most critical public health threats in disadvantaged communities.

Objective 14 — Protect and Enhance Public Access to the State's Waterways, Lakes, and Beaches

Protect and enhance public access to the state's waterways, lakes, and beaches for cultural, recreational, and economic purposes consistent with maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Objective 15 — Strengthen Alignment of Land Use Planning and Integrated Water Management

Strengthen the alignment of goals, policies, and programs for improving local land-use planning and IWM.

Objective 16 — Strengthen Alignment of Government Processes and Tools

Improve, align, and transform processes and administrative tools (incentives and oversight) — at all levels of government — used for water planning, public engagement, program/project implementation, and policy- and regulation-setting to advance IWM.

Objective 17 — Improve Integrated Water Management Finance Strategy and Investments

State government uses consistent, reliable, and diverse funding mechanisms with an array of revenue sources to support statewide and regional IWM activities. State government also makes future investments in innovation and infrastructure (green and grey) based on an adaptive and regionally appropriate prioritization process.