

## D. Objectives

### How Objectives Were Determined

The agencies participating in the Santa Cruz County IRWMP process agreed early on that it was critical to carefully develop a set of plan objectives which reflect regional priorities and could be used to assess the efficacy of potential projects. Accordingly, the group appointed a three-member Steering Committee (Committee), which, with the help of the consulting team, developed a robust set of planning objectives, which were then adopted by the larger agency group. These objectives were used to classify potential projects as ‘high priority projects’ or ‘potential future projects’. The classification process is described in Section F. This Section describes the development of the objectives themselves.

### Attributes of Planning Objectives

#### Ability to Discriminate Among Strategies

An objective must be able to discriminate among different strategies (i.e. projects). If all strategies perform similarly against a particular objective, it is of no use. Planners should be able to ask, *for each individual project*, whether the project meets each objective.

#### Understandable and Meaningful to Decision Makers

The objectives must extract the information most important to decision makers and be expressed in ways that will be meaningful to them.

#### Reasonable Number

The number of objectives must be sufficient to cover the issues that are truly important, and no more than that. Overlap among the objectives (i.e. having two objectives which basically measure the same thing) must be minimized. While there is no “right” number of objectives, it is important to recognize that more objectives introduce more complexity into the analysis and decision-making.

#### Reflect Community Concerns

The objectives must accurately reflect the issues that are important to citizens and policymakers. This will ensure that the plan recommendations will do a good job at supporting those concerns.

#### Ends Oriented

The objectives must refer to real-world ends, rather than means to achieving those ends. While there are undoubtedly grey areas, the distinction is nevertheless an important one.

#### Precise Language

The words used to describe each objective are important. Precision is important to avoid ambiguity and later misunderstandings.

## Plan Objectives

Based on these attributes, the Committee developed IRWMP objectives in the areas of:

- Water supply reliability
- Raw water quality
- Delivered water quality
- Habitat restoration and maintenance
- Recreation
- Public health
- Flood management
- Regional economic health
- Regional collaboration

In addition, the Committee determined that projects must meet two implementation criteria:

- Readiness to proceed
- Availability of funding

The precise wordings of the objectives and implementation criteria were thoroughly discussed, and the final statements of each objective are the product of a thoughtful collaborative effort to ensure that the words reflect regional priorities.

### 1. Water Supply Reliability

*Minimize the impact of droughts, production facility failures, or groundwater overdrafts on regional water supplies. Reduce the likelihood of domestic water shortages and any future need to import water from outside the County.*

### 2. Raw Water Quality

*Maximize the quality of surface and ground water in the county by addressing sources or conduits of contamination.*

### 3. Delivered Water Quality

*Maximize the quality of delivered drinking water as well as reclaimed water for irrigation.*

### 4. Habitat Restoration & Maintenance

- a. Aquatic: Restore and maintain habitats to support local aquatic species.
- b. Terrestrial: Restore and maintain habitats to support terrestrial species of local flora and fauna.
- c. Ocean: Restore and maintain habitats to support Monterey Bay marine life.

**5. Recreation**

*Maximize the recreational value of county water resources.*

**6. Public Health**

*Minimize adverse water-related public health impacts in the county.*

**7. Flood Management**

*Minimize the adverse impacts of future flood events.*

**8. Regional Economy**

*Add maximum value to the regional economy.*

**9. Regional Collaboration**

*Continue and expand collaboration among public and private agencies to address county water-related challenges.*

**10. Readiness to Proceed**

*Be prepared to proceed with approved projects in a timely manner.*

**11. Availability of Funding**

*Ensure that sufficient local and regional funding is available to move forward with projects.*

Appendix D contains information about the relationship between these objectives and the ‘Water Management Strategies’ set forth in the State IRWM Plan Standards, and lists the regional projects that meet those strategies.

## **PRELIMINARY SUB-OBJECTIVES TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE IRWM PLAN EXPANSION**

As described in Section I, the partner agencies view this IRWM planning process as an opportunity to initiate a longer-term comprehensive regional planning activity. Therefore, they intend to significantly expand the IRWMP. Among other things, the expanded plan will, where appropriate, develop detailed sub-objectives for each of the major objectives described above. As a start to that process, and to highlight the extensive planning that has already taken place in the region, the following set of sub-objectives are drawn from existing planning documents. These will be refined and added to in the IRWM Plan expansion. A complete list of planning documents referenced is included in Appendix C.

### **Objective 1: Water Supply Reliability**

*Minimize the impact of droughts, production facility failures, or groundwater overdrafts on regional water supplies. Reduce the likelihood of domestic water shortages and any future need to import water from outside the County.*

#### Sub-Objectives:

- A. Investigate and pursue regional approaches and interagency cooperation to correct water deficiencies.
- B. Review water rights and monitor streamflow and diversion rates to protect fisheries, recreation and downstream users.
- C. Protect and enhance opportunities for groundwater recharge. Enhance opportunities for use of recycled water.
- D. Provide comprehensive groundwater basin management.
- E. Ensure that water supply issues are thoroughly addressed in the review of development proposals and environmental impact reports.

### **Objective 2: Raw Water Quality**

*Maximize the quality of surface and ground water in the county by addressing sources or conduits of contamination.*

#### Sub-Objectives:

- A. Implement a comprehensive erosion control program to coordinate existing efforts and fill critical gaps.
- B. Implement septic system management and manure management programs to correct and prevent contamination from septic systems, livestock, and agricultural operations.
- C. Update design criteria and general plan policies to implement an urban runoff control program consistent with Phase II of the federal stormwater regulations.
- D. Update policies and programs to identify old or abandoned wells that could serve as conduits of contamination to deeper groundwater aquifers.
- E. Actively pursue watershed protection and source water protection programs and projects in coordination with the water agencies, land use agencies, and the Department of Health Services (DHS).
- F. Develop a regional clearinghouse for water quality data, geographic information and other water resource information.
- G. Develop, implement, and support a program to monitor effectiveness of projects.

**Objective 3: Delivered Water Quality**

*Maximize the quality of delivered drinking water as well as reclaimed water for irrigation.*

Sub-Objective:

- A. Ensure that drinking water extraction, treatment and collection facilities meet State and Federal standards.
- B. Ensure that recycled water treatment and delivery facilities meet State and Federal standards.

**Objective 4: Habitat Restoration & Preservation**

Aquatic: *Restore and maintain habitats to support local aquatic species.*

Terrestrial: *Restore and maintain habitats to support terrestrial species of local flora and fauna.*

Ocean: *Restore and maintain habitats to support Monterey Bay marine life.*

Sub-Objectives:

- A. Implement recommendations in completed watershed restoration and enhancement plans.
- B. Conduct watershed assessments and develop restoration plans for other county watersheds. Supplement and update watershed assessments and plans as necessary.
- C. Implement the Partners in Restoration permit coordination program and other strategies to assist landowners with habitat restoration projects.
- D. Improve coho salmon and steelhead passage to spawning and rearing habitats, particularly in the San Lorenzo, Aptos/Soquel, and North Coast subbasins. Focus on opening up entire reaches or tributaries where feasible.
- E. Improve quality of habitats in lagoons. In particular, implement recommendations from the Comparative Lagoon Ecological Assessment Project, the Soquel Creek Lagoon Management & Enhancement Plan Update, the Lower San Lorenzo River and Lagoon Management Plan, and other lagoon-related plans.
- F. Restore and expand wetland habitats, particularly in the Watsonville Sloughs basin.
- G. Reduce sedimentation into streams, particularly from roads and point sources, per the erosion assessments and local watershed plans.
- H. Improve recruitment and retention of large woody material on streams in the North Coast, San Lorenzo, and Soquel/Aptos basins.
- I. Create contiguous habitat corridors where possible for migration of species such as the Long-Toed Salamander.
- J. Remove non-native invasive vegetation and revegetate with native plant species.
- K. Support educational and outreach programs such as the Watershed Cruzin' activity and resource guide.
- L. Acquire fee title or conservation easements on lands identified in watershed plans or by resource agencies, when other conservation solutions are not possible. Ensure adequate funding and infrastructure to manage properties and/or monitor easements.

- M. Develop, implement, and support a program to monitor effectiveness of restoration projects.

**Objective 5: Recreation**

*Maximize the recreational value of county water resources.*

Sub-Objectives:

- A. Reduce number of beach closures (see Public Health).
- B. Improve habitat/water quality in county lagoons.
- C. Provide for more public access to beaches, creeks and lagoons.

**Objective 6: Public Health**

*Minimize adverse water-related public health impacts in the county.*

Sub-Objectives:

- A. Implement stormwater management programs, including management of dry weather storm drain discharges.
- B. Upgrades sewage collection systems to minimize leaks and overflows
- C. Upgrade septic systems or extend sewer collection systems to areas subject to high rates of septic system failure.
- D. Improve water quality in lagoons.
- E. Ensure that all water supply systems meet state and federal health standards.

**Objective 7: Flood Management**

*Minimize the adverse impacts of future flood events.*

Sub-Objectives:

- A. Promote maintenance and restoration of groundwater recharge and limit runoff rates from new development to pre-development levels.
- B. Restore slough systems for improved habitat value and agricultural drainage.

**Objective 8: Regional Economy**

*Add maximum value to the regional economy.*

Sub-Objectives:

These will be identified in the expansion of the IRWM Plan.

**Objective 9: Regional Collaboration**

*Continue and expand collaboration among public and private agencies to address county water-related challenges.*

Sub-Objective:

- A. Consider new institutional structures to enhance cooperation among regional agencies in addressing water issues.

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