RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Approve joining Mariposa County with Madera and Merced (and possibly Fresno)
Counties in a State Dept of Water Resources recommended management district for
purposes of the Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan (IRWMP). State Prop
84 identifies $57 million for this proposed region and another $100 million available
for statewide competition that is only accessible through an approved IRWMP. At this
point we are only agreeing to jointly submit a Regional Acceptance Process (RAP)
application which will precipitate an interview with the Department of Water
Resources (DWR). If DWR concurs with our proposal we will be able to apply for a
$500+ grant to complete the formal plan and eventually access DWR funds for projects
prioritized by the consortium of regional partners.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The Board has previously approved the County Resource Conservation District (RCD)
as lead agency for this program. The Mariposa County Water Agency allocated $10,000
to combine with a $50,000 grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for the RCD to
complete the RAP proposal. Madera County previously completed an IRWMP but must
now come into conformance with the new state boundaries. Merced County is at the
same point as Mariposa County. All entities with water/watershed management
responsibilities are eventually expected to be part of the consortium. (i.e. NPS, USFS,
County approved water districts, etc.)

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
The IRWMP is a voluntary process. Unfortunately it is the only approved conduit to
any future monies from the DWR/Prop 84 pot. Mariposa County has significant water
issues and unknowns. Not participating in the IRWMP process will leave us no access
to state monies for water research, infrastructure and management.

Financial Impact? ( ) Yes (x) No  Current FY Cost: $  Annual Recurring Cost: $
Budgeted in Current FY? ( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) Partially Funded
Amount in Budget: $  
Additional Funding Needed: $  
Source:
Internal Transfer___ 4/5's vote
Unanticipated Revenue___ 4/5's vote
Transfer Between Funds___ 4/5's vote
Contingency___ 4/5's vote
( ) General ( ) Other

CLERK'S USE ONLY:
Res. No.: 28-158  Ord. No.  
Vote – Ayes: 5  Noes: 0
Absent:  
( ) Approved
☑ Minute Order Attached  ( ) No Action Necessary

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of
the original on file in this office.
Date: 
Attest: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
County of Mariposa, State of California
By:  
Deputy

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:
☑ Requested Action Recommended
No Opinion
Comments:

Revised Dec. 2002
COUNTY of MARIPOSA
P.O. Box 784, Mariposa, CA 95338 (209) 966-3222

BRAD ABORN, CHAIR
JANET BIBBY, VICE CHAIR
LYLE TURPIN
KEVIN CANN
JIM ALLEN

DISTRICT I
DISTRICT III
DISTRICT II
DISTRICT IV
DISTRICT V

MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: SUPERVISOR CANN
FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board

SUBJECT: Approve Joining Mariposa County with Madera and Merced (and Possibly Fresno) Counties in the State Department of Water Resources Recommended Management District for Purposes of the Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan

RESOLUTION 09-158

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

ADOPTED THIS Order on April 7, 2009

ACTION AND VOTE:

10:34 a.m., Supervisor Cann;
Approve Joining Mariposa County with Madera and Merced (and Possibly Fresno) Counties in the State Department of Water Resources Recommended Management District for Purposes of the Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan

BOARD ACTION: Supervisor Cann initiated discussion and clarified that the grant application to complete the formal plan is estimated to be around $500,000. Brenda Ostrom, consultant with Mariposa County Resource Conservation District, provided input on the process for establishing a region and discussion was held relative to the Regional Acceptance Process. (M)Turpin, (S)Allen, Res. 09-158 was adopted agreeing to proceed with the IRWMP process and joining the central California area in a State Department of Water Resources management district. Following discussion, the motion was amended, agreeable with the maker and second, to include developing a MOU with the South Sierra IRWMP/Ayes: Unanimous.

Cc: File
Proposed Central California Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
Regional Water Management Group Invitation

The state has innovated a system that presents an opportunity for a voluntary, non-regulatory planning process that both encourages and truly protects good faith efforts towards meaningful change and improvements that will benefit local communities, regions, and the state as a whole. To top it off, there is a built in reward system (eligibility for state funding) only for those who follow the rules.

Thanks for your consideration and participation!

Background: In September 2008, SB 1 (Perata, Stats. 2008, Ch. 1; eff. March 1, 2009) was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger. SB1 contains the "Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Act", CWC Sec 10530 et seq. Pursuant to that, effective March 1, 2009, the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) established the Region Acceptance Process (RAP) for the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program Guidelines. The RAP will be used to evaluate and accept an IRWM region into the IRWM grant program, California Water Code (CWC) §10541(f).

In anticipation of meeting the requirements of the RAP, for the past couple of months, stakeholders in Madera, Mariposa, and Merced as well as surrounding areas have been working within and around the region to establish boundaries. Locally, we uncovered "splitting" issues. For examples: Stakeholders in Madera feel that the Chowchilla watershed is best represented in the Madera area and stakeholders in Mariposa feel that the Chowchilla watershed is best represented in the Mariposa area. Note historically the Chowchilla River was called the Mariposa River. Some Merced stakeholders want to establish a boundary between Mariposa and Merced, however, no stakeholders in Mariposa support drawing a line. Merced Irrigation District has more water rights in Mariposa than Mariposa water agencies and non-profit entities and land management agencies feel like the Merced River watershed should be considered in its entirety, from the top of Madera in Yosemite National Park through Mariposa and down into Merced. Since we all want to be successful and eligible for funding as soon as possible, these conflicts are driving the effort for a combined region. Note that Madera County has an adopted IRWMP that must be put in a position to be eligible for implementation funding.

"This larger combined area could identify and justify projects of a scale that any one of the individual areas could not. The greatest opportunity for significant funding is to define the larger area as the IRWMP boundary. This collaborative effort will provide greater benefit across the region; while the three individual boundaries would signify to the State "business as usual." Part of our problem stems from fragmented responsibilities, missions and planning.” - Rita Kidd

The success of each of us depends on the success of all of us.

Annotated Summary from the California Water Plan Update Public Review Draft 2009: California is facing a significant water crisis in its history. Our policies, decisions, and actions must lead to long-term, sustainable water resource use that enhances our environment, our economy, and our communities. California must follow a strategic path. This means we need to make water management a priority at home, in our communities, on the farm, and at the office. These challenges require a vision and goals, an implementation plan with objectives and near-term and long-term actions, as well as recommendations to remove obstacles that stand in our way. Commitments are necessary for managing and planning in a way that ensures sustainable water use and reliable water supplies through 2050 and for future generations.
The new and continuing challenges of California's diverse and extreme conditions require a new approach to water management—one that is multi-faceted with creative flexibility, discipline, and innovation. Integrated water management actions provide a broad variety of benefits, including meeting existing and future water demands; improving the quality of water sources and supplies; providing flexibility to deal with extreme hydrological events, such as droughts and floods; and restoring and enhancing ecosystems to help sustain our natural resources.

Integrated resource planning is a systems approach that explores the cause-and-effect relationships affecting water resources wherever operations affect water use, quality, and supply. It analyzes all the interrelated water management components in a given region, among regions, or statewide. The focus is on the interrelation of the different water management components with the understanding that changes in the management of one component will affect the others. Because these components are often not confined to the boundaries of a single water management agency, county, or city, a consensus-based, cross-jurisdictional, regional approach is required to formulate comprehensive, win-win solutions to identified problems.

Regions have opportunities not available to individual water suppliers. Water suppliers that form partnerships with each other and with local governments, Tribes, and organizations in their region can accomplish projects and provide benefits that no single agency can do alone. For example, partnerships are allowing local governments and agencies to:

- improve water supply reliability by establishing emergency connections with neighboring water suppliers;
- increase operational flexibility by participating in regional groundwater and conjunctive management;
- protect water quality by participating in regional watershed management;
- reduce costs by cooperating with other agencies on water and resource management strategies like water conservation and outreach programs;
- facilitate new projects by contributing to local habitat conservation plans; and
- help achieve many other regional resource management objectives.

Partnerships lead to Integrated Regional Water Management plans and regional eligibility for grant funds. Integrated regional water management relies on a diversified portfolio of water strategies. Coordination with land planning agencies will help water suppliers and land planners anticipate and plan for future growth, and ensure that additional regional growth will not exceed water suppliers' capabilities. Ultimately, regional partnerships will enable optimal and effective management of water and other resources within a region, and the resulting regional plans will provide efficient solutions, consider other resource issues, and enjoy broad public support.

**Conclusion:** Based on the regulations (Proposition 84), the subsequent DWR guidelines, the public review draft of the California Water Plan Update 2009, and coordination meetings between stakeholders, the proposal is for a Central California IRWMP region. This region is optimally sized (not too big, not too small), strategically located (water from this area naturally flows north to San Francisco via the San Joaquin River with the addition of the Merced River and is diverted south – 70% of the water from the Upper San Joaquin heads south at Friant Dam to Los Angeles), and has representative stakeholders who are individually experienced and proven to plan and implement large scale projects. The very fact that these entities have come together to collaborate and cooperate in two months is a testament itself to how important we collectively feel this is and how we are able to quickly overcome our differences for the greater good.
The Central California IRWMP Proposed Regional Boundary essentially consists of the southeastern section of the state’s San Joaquin River hydrologic region (which is the same as the state’s Water Quality Control Board Region 5S) and includes the two southern most major watersheds in the state’s Mountain County area of interest (the Merced and San Joaquin) along with the Chowchilla and Fresno Rivers, which are between these two major watersheds. The region includes Madera, Mariposa, and eastern Merced Counties as well as US Forest Service land in Fresno County. The region encompasses both the foothill/mountain areas with the valley floor up to the eastern bank of the San Joaquin River. (The San Joaquin River is the proposed boundary since it is the border of the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Region – an area on the western side of the San Joaquin River that the state recognizes separately due to serious issues.) There is ongoing coordination with DWR and adjoining regions.

Stakeholders within the proposed region are organizing into a Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) as required for the RAP. They are seeking and securing the support of:

- Madera County
- Mariposa County
- Merced County
- Tribal Governments
- National Park Service
- US Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Farm Bureau
- CalFire
- Fire Safe Council
- UC Merced
- CalFed
- California Edison
- Mariposa Public Utility District
- Merced Irrigation District
- Chowchilla Water District
- Other Water Agencies
- Other Agencies and Organizations
- Non-Profits (included but not limited to Upper Merced Watershed Council, Yosemite Audubon, Sierra Club, etc.)
- as well as the public.

It is critical to achieve “official” support no later than April 20 so that joining entities will be able to review and comment on the Regional Acceptance Process (RAP) packet from April 21 to April 24. Then the RAP packet will be finalized and submitted to the state on April 27.

New regulations require that the RAP is successfully completed prior to any entity within the region being able to receive any future planning or implementation funding from DWR. It may be up to one year before the RAP opportunity is available again. Since there is such a critical need within the region to complete water and water-related projects as soon as possible, stakeholders within the region are collaboratively joining together to finish this first step in order to be eligible for millions of dollars in state funding.

What can I do?

1) To be part of this voluntary planning process, obtain the signatory authority of the agency, organization, or stakeholder you represent to support this regional application.

2) Spread the word! Forward this information to other agencies, organizations, stakeholders as well as the public within this region so that they have the opportunity to get involved!
Who do I contact?
Leona Montalvo 559-675-7821 ext. 218, lmontalvo@madera-county.com
Brenda Ostrom 209-966-8432, bostrom@sti.net
Or go to: www.irwm.org

Important notes: Since this process is voluntary, it is acknowledged that for one reason or another, stakeholders may choose not to participate, and that is up to them. Since this process is non-regulatory, it cannot delegate, limit, or expand any agency’s jurisdictional, statutory, and/or other authorities (regardless if that agency is participating in the process or not). Once DWR has determined that a region has been accepted, it will not be required to do so again, unless DWR determines and notifies the region that their approval is being suspended. Events that may cause a region to have their previously approved regional acceptance status suspended include but are not limited to: change in the region’s boundary; loss or addition of signatory agencies of the RWMG; demonstrated continued and prolonged inactivity; inability to self-sustain IRWM efforts; or changes in statutory requirements, new commonly accepted management practices, and changes in state water management policy.

By joining the group, what am I agreeing to?

We are voluntary private and public entities forming a Regional Water Management Group (RWMP) that have agreed to participate in the process of 1) establishing an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan regional boundary; 2) preparing a planning grant application to complete an IRWMP for our accepted region; 3) completing and adopting an IRWMP; and 4) implementing our completed IRWMP. Our RWMG consists of stakeholders and water management authorities that represent the majority of interests within our regional boundary.

We acknowledge all local agencies within our regional boundary with statutory authority over water supply, water quality, water management, and/or flood protection. We acknowledge each other’s local and regional interests in water management and planning. We agree to mitigate competing interests or conflicting policies among members at least to the point that those issues do not interfere with progress of integrated water planning and management. As a developing region, we agree to continue pursuit of understanding the full range of needs within our region including those of disadvantaged communities, other stakeholders, and the public.

We agree to develop a governance structure and include additionally identified stakeholders during preparation of our planning grant application. We will submit our final governance structure with our planning grant application.

Next step: After submitting the RAP package, the next step is to, as a group, complete a governance structure for the PLANNING process for the region. Note this has already been done for the Madera County IRWMP that is working on a parallel IMPLEMENTATION process for Madera County. This situation offers a unique opportunity to simultaneously start implementing improvements at the same time a planning process is completed for the entire region. Additional financial assistance has been requested to help complete the governance structure and there are successful examples of processes that our group can model.
**What is a governance structure?** According to DWR, the governance structure must facilitate the sustained development of regional water management and the IRWM process, both now and beyond the state grant IRWM funding programs. It must discuss how decisions are made, the steps in which the RWG arrives at decisions, and how RWMG members participate in the decision-making process. Examples of RWMG decisions to consider in the discussion include:

- Establishing IRWM plan goals and objectives
- Prioritizing projects
- Financing RWMG and IRWMP activities
- Implementing plan activities
- Making future revisions to the IRWM plan
- Hiring & managing consultants

The governance structure must also describe how new members will be incorporated and how the balance of interested persons or entities representing different sectors and interests have been or will be engaged in the process, regardless of their ability to contribute financially to the plan.

Finally, the governance structure must describe how it facilitates development of a single collaborative water management portfolio, prioritized on the regional goals and objectives of the IRWM region.

*Note again:* The process is voluntary and non-regulatory; it cannot delegate, limit, or expand any agency’s jurisdictional, statutory, and/or other authorities (regardless if that agency is participating in the process or not).

**What about the planning grant application?**

The Mariposa County Resource Conservation District (MCRC) received Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) funding to complete the planning grant application and has a contract in place to prepare the materials. The SNC funding, however, is currently not available due to the state budget situation. Note this does not mean that the MCRC will be the fiscal agent and/or the agency responsible for the IRWMP (that will be determined by the RWMG at a future date). The planning grant application is anticipated during the fall and has also been delayed due to the state budget situation. Hopefully the state funding will be available in time to meet the application deadline or, at the discretion of the RWMG, other alternatives can be sought.