

# UPPER KINGS BASIN IRWM AUTHORITY

## DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES (DAC) OUTREACH AND PLANNING

### PROPOSITION 84 IRWM PILOT PROPOSAL

JUNE 1, 2010

## **Summary**

The purpose of this proposed Upper Kings Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Authority (Upper Kings) Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Pilot Project is to empower DACs within the region to effectively participate in the region's Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) planning and develop long-term solutions to DAC water challenges in the region. Specifically, the project would strive to accomplish the following objectives:

- Develop a comprehensive inventory of all severely disadvantaged communities and their water related needs.
- Engage and integrate DACs effectively into the Upper Kings Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) by developing mechanisms to address priority DAC needs and support integrated solutions to DAC needs within the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP.
- Develop conceptual project descriptions and cost estimates to include in the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP master project list and facilitate partnerships with DACs and other IRWMP members and interested parties.

## **Evolution of the Upper Kings IRWM Authority**

The Upper Kings IRWM Authority (Authority) is the lead agency for the Upper Kings Basin IRWM planning area. The Authority began as a small group of large regional stakeholders in early 2001. That group was comprised of Kings River Conservation District (KRCD), Fresno Irrigation District (FID), Alta Irrigation District (AID) and Consolidated Irrigation District (CID) and was at that time simply referred to as the Basin Advisory Panel (BAP). The BAP was assisted by California Department of Water Resource (DWR) in developing a coordinated regional approach to addressing the significant groundwater overdraft issue in the Kings Basin, and implementation of regional solutions to that problem. Slowly, over the next few years, additional regional stakeholders began participating in that effort. New additions included two more irrigation/water districts, ten cities, three counties and fifteen other governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations.

In 2004 the BAP evolved into the Upper Kings Basin Water Forum (Forum), governed under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The primary focus of the Forum was to 1) design and implement an integrated groundwater and surface water model (IGSM), and 2) use the IGSM and input from diverse regional stakeholders to develop an IRWMP for the Upper Kings Basin region. DWR once again provided close technical and facilitative

support to the region, helping to interpret the IRWM Act of 2002 and programmatic elements from Chapter 8 of Proposition 50.

The Forum proceeded with the development and adoption of a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) in 2009, becoming what is today the Upper Kings IRWM Authority. As part of the formation, the IRWMP boundary was expanded to include the remaining uncovered portion of the Kings Groundwater Basin. During that process, an attempt was made to identify and reach out to prospective IRWMP regional stakeholders that were not actively participating. It was discovered that, while the list of stakeholders was indeed long and seemingly diverse (38 in total), numerous small and disadvantaged communities in the region were not participating in a meaningful way, and the problem somehow needed to be addressed.

### **Problem Statement**

Social demographics in the United States are constantly changing; in some places quite rapidly. Increasing rates of immigration, especially of Latino populations, is occurring in urban and rural areas throughout the country. There is growing attention to the emerging challenge that cultural diversity poses for planning; including language barriers in the planning process, and differences of cultural norms and social protocols amongst resident groups, and between planners and residents.

This is demonstrated by the fact that addressing the needs of DACs (from their perspective) is still not gaining significant traction. There continues to be a disconnect between DACs and IRWM Groups, not to mention the statewide IRWM program as a whole. In the Central San Joaquin Valley, DACs are predominately communities of color. These communities, in turn, are mostly Latino, relatively young in age (average age, 25-27) and categorized as Limited English Proficiency (LEPs). This population is commonly associated with farm-related work.

Major problems emerge around the planning process, specifically in terms of public participation: lack of inclusion of people of low income and ethnic minorities, both in their physical attendance and in their concerns within the public discussion, making it an excellent case study of participation, local governance and power. People of color and people of low income have historically lacked political representation in most institutions.

One problem that this project will seek to address is the challenges DACs face securing sufficient ongoing operation and maintenance (O&M) funding and resources to ensure adequate services at affordable rates for their low-income customers on a long-term basis. DACs need to examine 1) new

potential sources of revenue for DAC O&M (e.g. tax sharing agreements, redevelopment designations, etc.); 2) new potential cost saving/sharing options (e.g. consolidation options, joint operators, etc.); and 3) recommendations to help DACs ensure they can control the ongoing O&M costs for the life of a project (i.e. installation of water meters, etc.). Finally, DACs also face challenges finding and retaining good certified operators that are affordable, and these solutions need to address this challenge as well.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The two goals of the proposed pilot project are 1) to enable DACs to effectively participate in the planning and development of critically needed projects that will improve the overall quality of life in their communities, providing sustainable solutions in water-related capital improvement projects and the necessary and ongoing Operations and Maintenance (O&M); and 2) to implement a long-term sustainable engagement movement, designed with the intent of existing beyond the lifespan of the proposed pilot project, within the Upper Kings Basin Integrated Regional Water Management planning area.

Specifically, the project would strive to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Develop a comprehensive inventory of all disadvantaged communities and their water related needs.
2. Engage and integrate DACs effectively into the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP by developing mechanisms to address priority DAC needs and support integrated solutions to DAC needs within the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP.
3. Develop conceptual project descriptions and cost estimates to include in the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP master project list and facilitate partnerships with DACs and other IRWMP members and interested parties.

It is important that this project not just produce a process, but tangible benefits to truly interconnect disadvantaged communities with IRWM, keep them engaged, and allow a genuine opportunity for them to not remain behind other communities, interests, or stakeholders in the region. Therefore, this pilot will include the following tangible support to DACs, as needed:

- Technical assistance (project identification and conceptual project plan development, feasibility studies, project management, connection to internal and external funding opportunities, etc.)
- Facilitation of the partnerships between districts, communities, and other interested parties through the IRWMP to help develop mutual benefit projects
- Technical information & tools, including modeling and mapping data developed through the IRWMP.
- Coordination of sub-regional meetings with communities that share similar changes or are geographically linked.

In addition, this project will complement and leverage the Tulare Lake Basin Pilot Project, administered through Tulare County. The two projects complement each other and will progress in collaboration to ensure the information developed in each can inform and assist the other. Below is a table summarizing the differences between the two projects:

<b>Upper Kings Basin DAC Pilot Project</b>	<b>Tulare Lake Basin Pilot Project</b>
<u>Geographic Area:</u> Upper Kings Basin (1,085,171 acres)	<u>Geographic Area:</u> Tulare Lake Funding Area (approx 10.8 million acres, includes Upper Kings Basin)
<u>Water-related needs covered:</u> All	<u>Water-related needs covered:</u> drinking water and wastewater only
<u>Purpose/Activities:</u> Engage and Integrate DACs in the Upper Kings IRWM planning process through DAC identification and outreach, needs prioritization, and project development	<u>Purpose/Activities:</u> Developing an integrated water quality and wastewater treatment program plan through feasibility studies and pilot projects
<u>Primary Deliverables:</u> Integration of DAC community maps, needs, priorities, and projects into Upper Kings IRWMP and establishment of sub-workgroups around DAC	<u>Primary Deliverable:</u> Tulare Lake Basin-wide program plan and report to the Legislature to address the drinking water and wastewater needs of DACs.

priorities.	
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Because the Tulare Lake Pilot Project will be conducting a larger study on solutions to ongoing O&M costs, this Upper Kings Basin pilot project will work closely with that effort to inform, integrate with, and complement that effort to further develop realistic solutions.

### **Methodology**

The pilot project will be overseen and implemented by a project team familiar with DAC engagement. The following tasks have been developed by the DAC Work Group within the Upper Kings Basin IRWM Authority to accomplish the objectives of the pilot:

*Objective 1:* Develop a comprehensive inventory of all disadvantaged communities and their water related needs.

- *Task 1.1: Identify and map all DACs in the region*

DAC locations would be mapped utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS) tools and methods. Map legends would highlight Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs) and Small DACs. While the project will include a list of all Disadvantaged Communities in the region based on 80% of the Statewide Mean Household Income (MHI), it is necessary to focus this pilot on the needs of SDACs (and perhaps further focus based on size, incorporation status, etc.), given that nearly every community in the region would qualify as a disadvantaged community.

- *Task 1.2: Outreach to DACs in the region*

The outreach effort will go beyond the traditional method of limiting communication to managers, consultants and elected officials but must include bilingual meetings with community residents and those typically left out of planning processes. Outreach efforts will focus on communicating the backdrop and objectives of statewide IRWM and the current Upper Kings Basin regional effort, as well as recruitment of representatives for on-going stakeholder participation and solicitation of input on community water-related needs. Where appropriate, needs/income surveys may be conducted in identified communities. While the outreach will include broader community outreach, the existing water related entities in each

community will be vital to these efforts, as they are the entities that generally have the power or jurisdiction over projects and solutions.

o *Task 1.3: Outline and map DAC's needs*

The pilot will outline and map the communities and needs identified through the outreach process in a format that can be integrated into the existing Upper Kings Basin IRWMP Plan. The DAC needs map would be coded to show project needs such as Drinking Water, Wastewater, Storm Drain, Flood Control, etc. This will help integrate these needs into the broader IRWMP and help facilitate identification of common needs and potential partnerships with other DACs, IRWMP members and interested parties.

*Objective 2:* Engage and integrate DACs effectively into the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP by developing mechanisms to address priority DAC needs and support integrated solutions to DAC needs within the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP.

o *Task 2.1: Organize DAC sub-workgroups within the region.*

After the outreach has been conducted and the needs have been mapped, the Project Team will convene DAC representatives to prioritize the needs of DACs in the region and to develop and participate in on-going DAC sub-workgroups. The DAC sub-workgroups will be formed to move forward on the DAC-driven priorities identified and to integrate them into the larger IRWMP. Examples of workgroups that may be formed through this process are the following:

- Sub- geographic regions working to develop or explore joint regional solutions to drinking water and/or wastewater needs. (i.e. Cutler-Orosi and surrounding community sub-region to discuss/study inter-connection and consolidation options and Alta Irrigation District's (AID) surface water treatment opportunity<sup>1</sup>).
- Small community systems wanting to address unaffordable on-going O&M costs or other technical, managerial or financial capacity challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> The AID surface water treatment project is currently on the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP project list and is intended to provide surface water to DACs in the region, although additionally feasibility studies are needed.

- Communities interested in developing models for energy and water efficient technology/planning integration into DAC projects.
- *Task 2.2: Develop project lists for DACs*

In addition to the workgroups, the Project Team will work with as many DAC representative(s) as possible to formulate water-related projects based on the needs identified, and include them in the IRWMP List of Projects. Technical assistance to develop project descriptions will include cost estimates, as well as identification of potential funding sources to plan, design and construct recommended projects. These projects will be developed with existing DAC water-related agencies/entities where they exist. Whenever possible, the Project Team will facilitate partnerships with other IRWMP members and interested parties to encourage multi-benefit and sustainable project development.
- *Task 2.3: Support development of sub-workgroup projects representing integrated solutions to priority DAC needs.*

The Project team will work with each DAC sub-work group to develop a project (or a series of projects, study, or other work plan) to advance the development of integrated solutions to the identified priority DAC need. Depending on the sub-workgroups formed, examples of these projects may include feasibility studies for connection of surrounding communities to a regional treatment plant, consulting assistance on ways to support long-term O&M, matching funds for predevelopment assistance to fill funding gaps necessary to prepare feasibility studies, preliminary engineering, environmental documents, etc. An overall budget will be available to each work group but the exact use will ultimately depend on the focus of the sub-workgroup itself.

### **Planning Group**

To ensure appropriate and effective administrative, technical and operational experience, Upper Kings Basin will work with the DAC Work Group, currently consisting of RMA Services (RMAS), Self-Help Enterprises, and the Community Water Center.

## Deliverables

- Map of all DACs and DAC needs in the region
- List of DAC project descriptions and cost estimates for as many DACs as possible in the region to address identified needs.
- Identification of potential funding sources for listed DAC projects, including incorporating the list into the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP project list, as well as submitting the list to other local, federal and state funding agencies.
- Inclusion of additional DAC stakeholders in the Upper Kings Basin IRWMP
- List of priority needs of DACs in the Upper Kings Basin region and creation of workgroups with projects/work plans around 3-5 priorities.
- Final Report including an overview of the project, lessons learned, recommendations, and any templates, forms or processes developed during the course of the pilot.

## Schedule

Total Time: 18 months

<i>Task 1.1: Identify and map all DACs in the region</i>	<i>Months 1-2</i>
<i>Task 1.2: Outreach to DACs in the region</i>	<i>Months 2-5 and on-going</i>
<i>Task 1.3: Outline and map DAC's needs</i>	<i>Months 3-6</i>
<i>Task 2.1: Organize DAC sub-workgroups within the region</i>	<i>Months 7-9 and ongoing</i>
<i>Task 2.2: Develop project lists for DACs</i>	<i>Months 10-18</i>
<i>Task 2.3: Support development of projects representing integrated solutions to priority DAC needs.</i>	<i>Months 10-18</i>
<i>Preparation of Final Report</i>	<i>Months 15-18</i>

## Cost Estimate

The overall budget for implementation of the proposed DAC planning model is \$500,000.

<i>Task 1.1: Identify and map all DACs in the region</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>
<i>Task 1.2: Outreach to DACs in the region</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>
<i>Task 1.3: Outline and map DAC's needs</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>
<i>Task 2.1: Organize DAC sub-workgroups within the region</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>
<i>Task 2.2: Develop project lists for DACs</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>
<i>Task 2.3: Support development of projects representing integrated solutions to priority DAC needs.</i>	<i>\$150,000</i>
<i>Overall administration and write up of report</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>