

Memorandum of Mutual Understandings **Integrated Regional Water Management Plan**

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to establish the mutual understandings of North Coast area agencies with respect to their joint efforts towards developing a North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) that will increase regional coordination, collaboration and communication and help in obtaining funding for water-related projects.

2. GOALS

The goals of the IRWMP are:

2.1. To develop a comprehensive plan to facilitate regional cooperation in providing water supply reliability, water recycling, water conservation, water quality improvement, storm water capture and management, flood management, wetlands enhancement and creation, and environmental and habitat protection and improvement.

2.2. To foster coordination, collaboration and communication between North Coast agencies responsible for water-related issues and interested stakeholders, to achieve greater efficiencies, enhance public services, and build public support for vital projects.

2.3. To improve regional competitiveness for State and Federal grant funding.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. **Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.** The plan envisioned by state legislators and state resource agencies that integrates the projects and management plans of all water-related agencies and stakeholders in a region, in this case the North Coast Region, in order to foster coordination, collaboration and communication among those entities and to assist decision-makers in awarding grants and other funding. The plan will address water supply, water quality, wastewater, stormwater/flood control, watershed planning and aquatic habitat protection and restoration.

3.2. **Agency.** A public entity, be it a special district, city or other governmental entity, responsible for providing one or more services in the areas of water supply, water quality, wastewater, recycled water, water conservation, stormwater/flood control, watershed planning and aquatic habitat protection and restoration.

3.3. **Service function.** A water-related individual service function provided by an agency, i.e. water supply, water quality, wastewater, recycled water, water conservation, stormwater/flood control, watershed planning, and aquatic habitat protection and restoration.

3.4. **Project.** A comprehensive list of resource projects or programs, in need of funding that addresses: water supply, water quality, wastewater, stormwater/flood control, watershed planning or aquatic habitat protection and restoration.

3.5. **Management plan.** An agency's or organization's plan, based in part on the land-use plans within the entity's jurisdiction, that addresses how that entity will provide service in the future in one or more of the following service functions: water supply, water quality, wastewater, recycled water, water conservation, stormwater/flood control, watershed planning or aquatic habitat protection and restoration.

3.6. **Integration.** Assembling into one document the water-related management strategies, projects and plans in the North Coast Region. The first phase would be to identify water management strategies for the region and the priority projects that work together to demonstrate how these strategies work together to provide reliable water supply, protect or improve water quality, provide watershed protection and planning, and provide environmental restoration and fisheries protection. Projects and plans would be categorized and opportunities to identify regional benefits of linkages between multiple water management strategies among projects and plans of separate service functions and to see where projects and plans of separate service functions may further interrelate, e.g. wastewater treatment and water recycling or habitat restoration.

3.7. **North Coast Technical Review Panel.** The panel comprised of representatives from each North Coast County appointed by IRWMP participants in the North Coast Region to compile and integrate projects and management plans of the North Coast region. Review panel members will define the process of compilation and integration including format, schedules and ground rules to ensure process consistency and uniformity.

4. IRWMP PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

4.1. **Public agencies.** Public agencies, which have developed projects and management plans, are responsible to their respective electorates, and are devoting staff to the process, will take the lead as described in "Approach to developing the IRWMP" below. These agencies will be the signatories to this memorandum of mutual understandings.

4.2. **Contributing entities.** Other entities, such as business and environmental groups, are considered valuable contributors and will continue to be invited and encouraged to participate and will be invited to be signatories to this memorandum of mutual understandings.

4.3. **Regulatory agencies.** These agencies, such as the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Coastal Conservancy, and Department of Fish and Game, will be invited to participate. If they cannot participate in work meetings, representatives of the technical review panel will keep them advised of project and plan progress and seek guidance as needed.

5. MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS

5.1. Need for a North Coast IRWMP

5.1.1. To foster increased coordination, collaboration and communication between North Coast water-related agencies and interested stakeholders that may result in more effectively managed resources, cost efficiencies and better service to the public.

5.1.2. Also, representatives of state resource agencies and state legislators have suggested that qualification of some state grants and other funding criteria will require development and implementation of Integrated Regional Water Management Plans.

5.2. **Subject matter scope of the IRWMP.** The IRWMP will include, but may not necessarily be limited to, water supply, water quality, wastewater, recycled water, water conservation, stormwater/flood control, watershed planning and aquatic habitat protection and restoration. It is acknowledged that the management plans of each individual public agency are based, in part, on the land-use plans within an agency's jurisdiction. Therefore, the resultant IRWMP will by design have incorporated the land-use plans and assumptions intrinsic to the respective water-related service function.

5.3. **Geographical scope of the IRWMP.** The North Coast Region for this Memorandum is defined as the seven North Coast counties – Del Norte, Siskiyou, Humboldt, Trinity, Lake, Mendocino and Sonoma – even though some areas of some counties and individual agencies may lay outside the North Coast hydrologic region.

5.4. Approach to developing the IRWMP

5.4.1. A reasonable approach towards developing the IRWMP is first for the participants involved to create a technical review panel whose members work together to compile their individual projects and management plans to see where cooperative efforts could be employed. The panel would also work to identify needs and list projects that may qualify for funding under various state and federal grant and loan programs.

5.4.2. The proposed forum for this regional planning effort is through the associations, coalitions, or other entities to which the majority belong, inviting others agencies and entities to participate in the effort.

5.4.3. The technical review panel should refer to any already completed and ongoing compilation efforts for information and input.

5.4.4. Once there has been a compilation of projects and plans for the separate, service function areas, the North Coast technical review panel will place all the projects and plans into one integrated document. As stated above in “definitions,” the first phase would be to identify water management strategies for the region and the priority projects that work together to demonstrate how these strategies work together to provide reliable water supply, protect or improve water quality, provide watershed protection and planning, and provide environmental restoration and fisheries protection. Projects and plans would be categorized and opportunities to identify regional benefits of linkages between multiple water management strategies among projects and plans of separate service functions and to see where projects and plans of separate service functions may further interrelate, e.g. wastewater treatment and water recycling or habitat restoration.

5.5. **Decision-making.** Consensus will be sought in the event the need for a decision arises.

5.6. **Approval of the IRWMP.** IRWMP approval and adoption will occur by participating agency and organization signatures on the IRWMP.

5.7. **Non-binding nature.** This document and participation in this IRWMP effort are nonbinding, and in no way suggest that an agency may not continue its own planning and undertake efforts to secure project funding from any source. An agency may withdraw from participation at any time.

5.8. **Personnel and financial resources.** It is expected that agencies and organizations will contribute the personnel and financial resources necessary to develop the IRWMP.

5.9. **Other on-going regional efforts.** Development of the IRWMP is separate from efforts of other organizations to develop water-related plans on a regional basis. These other plans include, but are not limited to, Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Program, Eel Russian River Commission, and Department of Water Resources (DWR) Bulletin 160 development. As the IRWMP is developed, work products can be shared with these separate efforts to provide them with current information.

5.10. **Reports and communications.** The North Coast technical review panel will regularly report on their progress to the agencies and stakeholders they represent and the associations or organizations to which they belong that are involved in the IRWMP process.

5.11. **Termination.** Because the IRWMP will require periodic review and updating for use into the future, it is envisioned that the joint efforts of those involved will be ongoing in maintaining a living document. Thus this document

will remain as a reflection of the understandings of the participants. As indicated, individual signatories of this Memorandum may terminate their involvement at any time.

6. SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS

We, the undersigned representatives of our respective agencies, acknowledge the above as our understanding of how the North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan will be developed.

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agency

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More signature blocks as required