

Inyo-Mono IRWM Program: Building Capacity for Disadvantage Communities in a Rural/Headwater Region

Engaging disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the IRWMP program is a challenge regardless of region. However, the strategies that will succeed may look very different depending on the region. To successfully identify and develop a series of DAC pilot programs, regions will need to be grouped into categories likely to benefit from similar strategies. We propose that Mountain/Headwater regions share similar challenges and will likely benefit from similar strategies in their efforts to engage DACs as well as regional tribal groups.

Mountain/Headwater regions are of paramount importance to water throughout the state of California. The Sierra Nevada watersheds provide as much as 65% of California's developed freshwater and freshwater is the single greatest good in terms of economic value from these regions. Yet the Sierra Nevada are comprised of unique characteristics including a disproportionate number of DACs. Specifically, Mountain/Headwater regions face the following challenges when it comes to engaging DACs:

- Amongst the highest proportions of DACs within California;
- High proportion of remote communities that have a higher cost, per capita, to maintain basic services;
- Expansive geographic regions make it difficult to do in-person outreach and to promote meeting participation;
- Per capita funding distributions don't take into account the higher per capita costs of outreach and engagement;
- Sierra communities are underfunded and underserved - money continues to be allocated to urban regions;
- The Mountains have distinct water, tribal and DAC issues and contexts from the rest of the state.

For the reasons noted above and more, to adequately address water needs for the state of California and functionally address the significant needs of DACs in Mountain/Headwater regions, it is imperative to effectively engage DACs in the IRWMP process.

Inyo-Mono IRWM Region Provides a Strategic Model, Rural DAC and Tribal Program

In all, the Inyo-Mono planning region includes approximately 11% of the state of California and over 50% of the Lahontan region (eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada south to the Mojave Desert). Demographically, the Inyo-Mono planning region is very rural having numerous small population centers spread throughout the planning region, the largest of which has a population of just over 7,500. Moreover, the majority of communities in this planning region (note Inyo County as a whole is designated as a DAC) fall under the designation of being Disadvantaged Communities. Such communities have little means to address water quality and supply issues of paramount importance to their wellbeing.

In addition to providing necessary water to communities within the Inyo-Mono planning region, the region is the source of on average 40-60% of the total annual water consumed by the City of Los Angeles' four million residents. In short, the Inyo-Mono planning region is very rural and expansive; plays a critical role in the provision of water both for local and distant populations;

yet is challenged by fiscal, environmental and institutional capacity constraints necessary to address comprehensive water issues. We consider DWR's IRWMP Program a strategic opportunity to address water related issues within the Inyo-Mono planning region.

Formally launched in early 2008, the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning region has realized the importance of engaging as many communities (including tribal entities) as possible. Indeed, the Inyo-Mono RWM Planning Committee has prioritized the need to effectively engage DACs throughout the planning region. To date we have done well in achieving our goal of the greatest inclusion of DACs as possible. Yet, the Inyo-Mono RWM Planning Committee also believes that they can achieve greater results and in doing so, provide an effective model for other Mountain/Headwater regions with support from DWR to develop a pilot engagement program.

Goals and Objectives of Proposed DAC Pilot Program

Building on the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning effort thus far, the overarching goals for the Mountain/Headwater Pilot DAC Program are to determine how to most efficiently and effectively identify and engage DACs in such a way that empowers them to more aptly address local and regional water priorities. In doing so, a second primary goal of the Pilot Program is to proactively and comprehensively engage DACs in the drafting and implementation of the Inyo-Mono IRWM Plan. Another goal is to establish an effective mechanism to translate lessons learned from the Pilot DAC Program to other regions sharing similar characteristics throughout the Sierra Nevada and beyond. To achieve our stated goals, we will be addressing the following objectives.

1. Determining the means to most effectively identify DACs.
2. Determining accurate methods for defining a DAC beyond the mean household income metrics.
3. Determining what methods are most effective in engaging DAC's in the IRWM process?
4. Determining the means to most effectively identify key water related issues.
5. Determining what are the important water related issues in most DACs?
6. Determining what are the DAC's constraints on solving their problems, being involved in the IRWM process, and being able to develop projects for eventual implementation (educational, financial, technical, etc.)?
7. Determining how best to assist with DAC project development to a "conceptual plans & cost estimate" level.
8. Determining what methods are available and most effective to assist DAC's in financial and technical O&M needs after projects are implemented.

Proposed Scope of Work (SOW)

Task 1 Project planning

Task 1 will involve planning and preparation for the Pilot Program. This will begin with development of a synthesis that reviews the work done by the Inyo-Mono RWM Planning Committee to-date with respect to DAC outreach and relationship building in the region. This task will also include a day of training for Inyo-Mono IRWM staff and stakeholders, as well as staff from other IRWMP regions, to provide insight on furthering communication with and outreach to DACs. Additionally, a survey will be conducted via the IRWM Roundtable of Regions, to assess the status of DAC engagement in other regions of the state with an emphasis on rural and headwater communities. An outside entity with expertise on DAC outreach will be contracted for this training. After this initial synthesis and training, a specific

strategy for reaching out to DACs will be developed in conjunction with an outside outreach specialist/facilitator. The more specific work of convening initial meetings and distributing materials will then be undertaken. Based on the results of these meetings, written materials will be developed and disseminated to DACs along with scheduling information for meetings to be held through Task 2.

Task 1 Deliverables:

1. Synthesis of efforts to date specific to outreach and engagement of DACs in the Inyo-Mono IRWM Planning process as well as other regions throughout the state.
2. Completion of technical training of Methods and Tools to identify and engage DACs in IRWM Planning processes.
3. Completion of a DAC Outreach Strategy to be implemented in Task 2.
4. Written materials for dissemination to DACs to use in meetings in Task 2.

Task 2 Outreach implementation

Task 2 will provide the basis for the Pilot Program to implement an outreach strategy that aims to not only test traditional outreach and engagement strategies relevant to DACs but also provide the means to explore and evaluate alternative strategies based on the training provided in Task 1. It is expected that a hybrid approach to engaging and addressing the needs of DACs in Mountain/Headwater settings will be created and utilized. The outreach meetings will be conducted in two phases (within the Inyo-Mono Region and with three additional meetings being convened in Mountain/Headwater communities outside of the Inyo-Mono Region): Phase I will involve convening meetings with identified DACs per the outcome of Task 1. Phase II will provide a critically important opportunity to convene a second round of meetings with the same DACs with the intent of providing a synthesis of Phase I meetings and to essentially validate data collected based on feedback from the DACs themselves. With support from the Inyo-Mono IRWM staff, Phase I and II meetings will be led by an outreach specialist/facilitator and that has already established relationships with many stakeholder groups in the Inyo-Mono Planning Region.

Task 2 Deliverables:

1. At least ten meetings with DACs throughout the Inyo-Mono Planning Region and three outside of the region focused on addressing Objectives 1-8 above.
2. Validation of findings relevant to Objectives 1-8 by participating DACs.
3. Convening of Inyo-Mono Region-wide workshop bringing representatives from DACs together to share and discuss results specific to Objectives 1-8.

Task 3 Needs assessment

California Rural Water Association (CRWA) working with project staff will provide onsite technical assistance and support targeted specifically to disadvantaged communities within the Inyo-Mono region. CRWA's support efforts will focus on water systems both public, and private, including tribal systems within the Inyo-Mono region. The project goals and objectives will be to

assist water systems with Technical, Managerial, and Financial (TMF) capacity for meeting applicable drinking water laws, regulations, and long term sustainability. These support activities will also be targeted to help systems understand and implement water efficiency, and conservation measures within their particular regions. In addition, CRWA's technical support will encourage and assist disadvantaged communities in applying for state and or federal funding related to improved water management practices.

Task 3 will also provide needs assessments for DACs regarding climate change, data, and data management. Disadvantaged communities may not have access to various kinds of data to assist in identifying project needs and implementing priority projects. This task will help to identify information gaps among regional DACs, which will then lead into the capacity building work outlined in Task 4.

Task 3 Deliverables:

1. Twenty (20) needs assessments completed
2. Synthesis of primary needs of DAC water systems and other identified needs of DACs
3. Synthesis of climate change and other data-related information gaps among area DACs

Task 4 Capacity building

Task 4 will build upon Task 3 by using the information gathered therein and provide a series of capacity-building workshops to DACs within the planning region. It is recognized that rather than doing the work for disadvantaged communities, it is better to provide training, knowledge, and assistance in order to create the capacity for these communities to address their own needs. The workshops will be topical and will include project development/grantwriting, climate change adaptation, and data gathering/data management. Specialists in grantwriting, economic analysis, climate change (including adaptation strategies and greenhouse gas emissions accounting), GIS, websites, and data management will lead the workshops and be available on a one-on-one basis as resources for DACs.

Task 4 Deliverables:

1. Documentation of workshops, including schedules, agendas, and other input
2. Post-workshop reports, including evaluation of effectiveness and other lessons learned
3. Inclusion of workshop results and evaluations into reports outlined in Task 5.

Task 5 Report compilation

Task 3 will involve synthesizing information derived from Tasks 1 & 2 and drafting of two reports. The first is a Final Report to DWR that will be an internal document for DWR-IRWMP Division Staff and based on the findings of the Pilot Program. The Report will be formally presented to DWR-IRWMP Staff providing an opportunity for a direct dialogue between DWR Staff and Project participants to occur. The second document will be a publication that is completed and made available in an appropriate format in order to assist other planning regions

as they move forward in their respective IRWM planning efforts. The former document will address all requirements of the Pilot Program Reporting.

Task 5 Deliverables:

1. Final Report completed and presented to DWR-IRWMP Division Staff.
2. Publication of study and results completed for broad distribution to other IRWM Planning Regions and elsewhere (Task 4).
3. Presentations developed for Task 4 outreach activities.

Task 6 Findings dissemination

The objective of Task 4 is to leverage the lessons learned from the Inyo-Mono DAC Pilot Program's experiences in a manner that enhances other planning efforts in regions sharing similar characteristics to the Inyo-Mono Planning region. This will be achieved via presentations to individual Sierra Nevada IRWM Planning efforts as well as organizing and convening an IRWMP summit providing an opportunity to share and exchange knowledge learned from the Inyo-Mono Project and the other Pilot Projects. More specifically, regional meetings and direct outreach to individual regions across the Sierra Nevada will be organized and convened. Following regional meetings, a two-day Sierra IRWM Summit to discuss headwaters issues with focus on developing and implementing DAC/tribal outreach and project development strategies will be organized and convened. The second day of the summit would be a Statewide IRWM Summit where all the DAC pilot programs present including the Inyo-Mono.

Task 6 Deliverables:

1. Dissemination of Project findings to targeted IRWM Planning Regions in Mountain/Headwater regions.
2. Convening of Sierra-regional IRWM meetings to disseminate DAC Pilot Project and Project results.
3. Convening of IRWMP Summit enabling dissemination of Project findings to relevant parties involved in the IRWM Planning process.

Scope of Work and Proposed Timeline:

Task Number	Description of Activity to Accomplish Task	Start & End Dates
Task 1	Identify under-represented stakeholders in the planning region and develop and implement an outreach strategy to engage them in at least 10 critical planning meetings (Objectives 1-8)	October-December, 2011
Task 1.1	Conduct synthesis of efforts to date regarding engagement of DACs.	October-November, 2011
Task 1.2	Organize and convene training in collaboration with consultancy firm focused on how to identify and define DACs	November, 2011
Task 1.3	Develop an outreach strategy targeting DACs throughout planning region	November, 2011
Task 1.4	Identify and reach out to under-represented stakeholders throughout planning region	November-December, 2011
Task 1.5	Disseminate outreach materials and meeting schedules via electronic and hardcopy media materials	November-December, 2011
Task 2	Conduct stakeholder meetings to gather feedback on (1) priority local water issues (2) goals and objectives (3) strategies for addressing water issues, and develop first draft of Inyo-Mono IRWMP (Objectives 1-6)	January-April, 2012
Task 2.1	Conduct initial series of at least 10 meetings with DACs throughout the Inyo-Mono Planning Region	January–February, 2012
Task 2.2	Conduct at least 2 meetings with stakeholders in Northern San Bernardino and Eastern Kern Counties	January–February, 2012
Task 2.3	Synthesize findings based on Task 2.1 & 2.1	March, 2012
Task 2.4	Convene Inyo-Mono region-wide meeting of all participating DACs to share and validate synthesis per Task 2.3	April, 2012
Task 2.5	Conduct 3 meetings in other rural Sierra/headwater DACs	January–March, 2012
Task 3	Needs Assessments	March–June, 2012

Task 3.1	California Rural Water Association water systems needs assessments for DACs	March-April, 2012
Task 3.2	Climate change information needs assessments; perception assessment	April-May, 2012
Task 3.3	Data Management needs assessments	May-June, 2012
Task 4	Capacity Building	May–December, 2012
Task 4.1	Project development and grantwriting workshops	May–July, 2012
Task 4.2	Climate change workshops and information development; adaptation options	August-September, 2012
Task 4.3	Development of data management systems, website, GIS	June–December, 2012
Task 4.4	Project implementation needs (O&M, technical, financial) workshops	June–September, 2012
Task 5	Final synthesis and Report(s) drafting	January–April, 2013
Task 5.1	(1) Drafting of final report, (2) drafting of Outreach Publication based on findings from Tasks 2 & 3, (3) circulate reports for review/comment	January–April, 2013
Task 5.2	Finalize Final Report to DWR and Outreach Publication for dissemination to IRWM Planning regions and general public	April, 2013
Task 6	Project findings dissemination	May–June, 2013
Task 6.1	Present findings to DWR-IRWMP Division Staff	May, 2013
Task 4.2	Organize and convene Sierra Nevada IRWMP meetings and one Sierra/state-wide regional IRWMP Summit	May–June, 2013

Task 4.2	Presentation of Project results to at least one conference/symposium	May–June, 2013
Task 4.4	Convene DAC/Tribal summit to present results and validate findings	June, 2013

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