

**Inyo-Mono IRWM Program Disadvantaged Communities Project
Mid-Grant Outreach Synthesis
February, 2013**



INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Overview

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR), through voter-approved Proposition 84 (2006), made \$2.5 million available to Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Programs throughout the state to study and provide insight into disadvantaged community (DAC) involvement in the IRWM process. These grants were non-competitive; the funding was essentially available on a first-come, first-served basis. Each grant could provide up to \$500,000 in funding. The Inyo-Mono IRWM Program Office staff first applied for one of these DAC grants in May of 2010 and received word shortly thereafter that the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program would receive one of the grants, although funding was not made available until mid-2011.

In addition to the Inyo-Mono Program, four other IRWM regions were awarded this grant funding: North Coast, Greater Los Angeles, Coachella Valley, and Upper Kings River. More recently, the Imperial Valley IRWM region was awarded some DAC grant funding.

The original Inyo-Mono DAC grant application requested just over \$371,000, and full funding was awarded. Broadly, the focus of the tasks to be accomplished during the grant is to learn more about DAC-specific needs in the Inyo-Mono IRWM region and investigate DAC involvement in the IRWM process. During the course of working with stakeholders through the IRWM process, Program Office staff observed a significant need for building capacity in DACs, Tribes, and small water systems. Fulfilling this need became another focus of the DAC grant work. Specifically, the original work plan (included as an addendum to this report) included six main categories of tasks:

- Task 1: Identify DACs in the planning region and develop an outreach strategy
- Task 2: Conduct outreach and stakeholder meetings
- Task 3: Assess needs of DACs in the region
- Task 4: Build capacity of DACs in the region
- Task 5: Synthesize results and develop reports
- Task 6: Disseminate project findings

During the DAC outreach training held in February, 2012 (see p.5), the participants developed ideas about how to influence DAC-related legislation, funding, and policy and created two additional tasks for the DAC grant (Tasks 7&8). Because the Inyo-Mono region had not requested the full \$500,000 in available funding, Program Office staff inquired to DWR whether additional funding could be granted to the region. Eventually this funding was approved, and the total grant amount is now about \$496,000. The additional funding will be used to explore alternative methods of identifying and defining DACs and to produce a short documentary film about the importance of clean, reliable water supplies to DACs in the planning region.

DAC and tribal outreach in the Inyo-Mono region prior to the DAC grant

A main emphasis during the development of the Integrated Regional Water Management Program in the Inyo-Mono region was reaching out to stakeholders interested in water-related issues. In order to reach a broad cross-section of stakeholders, this outreach necessarily included DACs and tribes. As a first task in the DAC grant, Program Office staff developed a summary-to-date of outreach to DACs and tribes. This document is included as an appendix to this report.

Updated identification of DACs in the Inyo-Mono IRWM region

California statute defines a disadvantaged community as one whose median household income falls at or below 80% of the statewide median household income. The original list of DACs in the Inyo-Mono planning region was based on median household income (MHI) data from the 2000 Census. Part of the first tasks in the DAC grant was to update this list based on 2010 Census data. After waiting more than a year for these data to become available, it was discovered that the 2010 Census did not collect MHI data at the community level. Instead, it was suggested by DWR to use 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, the most recent of which (as of 2011) are composites of data collected between 2006 and 2010. More information on ACS estimates can be found at this website: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.

In conjunction with the recommendation to use ACS estimates, DWR also built an online interactive map to help users find DACs in their IRWM regions (<http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/resourceslinks.cfm>; scroll down to “DAC Maps”). While this mapping tool covers most DACs in the Inyo-Mono region, it does not cover Native American tribal lands. Those estimates were sourced directly from the ACS website.

Using the five-year ACS estimates, Program Office staff developed an updated list of DACs within the Inyo-Mono planning region. According to the 2006-2010 ACS data, a community is a DAC if its annual MHI is less than \$48,706 (which is 80% of the California statewide MHI of \$60,883). A list of communities fitting this definition is provided below. It is worth noting that the entirety of Inyo and Kern Counties fall below the DAC income threshold.

Table 1. Disadvantaged communities of the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning region.

Community	Population	Annual Median Household Income
Inyo County	18,434	\$44,808
Big Pine Paiute Reservation of the Owens Valley	262	\$43,214
Bishop	3,826	\$37,005
Bishop Paiute Tribe	1,828	\$46,384
Darwin CDP	30	\$30,893

Community	Population	Annual Median Household Income
Dixon Lane-Meadow Creek CDP	2,660	\$48,542
Fort Independence Tribe	81	\$30,417
Furnace Creek CDP	64	\$27,813
Homewood Canyon CDP	109	\$14,706
Independence	551	\$47,883
Keeler CDP	27	\$44,500
Lone Pine CDP	2,309	\$40,176
Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation	148	\$37,188
Pearsonville CDP	5	Not available ⁵
Shoshone CDP	33	\$28,750
Tecopa CDP	101	\$21,806
Timbisha-Shoshone Reservation	32	\$23,063
Valley Wells CDP	Not available	Not available
Wilkerson CDP	563	\$44,356
Kern County	815,693	\$47,089
China Lake Acres CDP	1,553	\$35,102
Inyokern	1,676	\$31,925
Mono County	13,905	\$55,087
Aspen Springs CDP ⁶	Not available	Not available
Benton CDP	289	\$40,119
Benton Paiute Reservation	75 ¹	\$9,938 ¹
Bridgeport Indian Colony	35 ²	\$10,625
McGee Creek CDP	29	Not available
Topaz CDP ⁷	Not available	Not available
Walker River Reservation	508	\$25,227
Walker CDP ⁷	677	\$30,682
Woodfords Community of the Washoe Tribe ⁴	139	\$25,417
San Bernardino County	2,005,287	\$55,845
Searles Valley CDP ³	2,088	\$35,147
Trona CDP	17	Not available

¹: From 2009 5-year ACS

²: From 2010 Decennial Census

³: Consists of the communities of Argus, Trona, Pioneer Point, and Searles Valley, CA. For our purposes, we consider only the Searles Valley CDP data, since they encompass Trona.

⁴: Woodfords Community is the sole branch of the Washoe Tribe located in CA

⁵: Communities with MHI listed as "Not available" are listed as DACs based on their DAC designation using DWR's DAC mapping tool: <http://www.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?&extent={%22xmin%22:-15522106.757711068,%22ymin%22:3383875.113067463,%22xmax%22:-11562057.196313709,%22ymax%22:5663533.044643953,%22spatialReference%22:{%22wkid%22:102100}}&appid=c034d1f8f9f34afef98f20be2a2fb790>

⁶: Aspen Springs is considered a DAC by DWR's mapping tool; anecdotal evidence suggests that Aspen Springs is not a DAC; the community's economic status will be reviewed through the DAC grant.

⁷: Topaz and Walker (and Coleville) constitute the Antelope Valley, which was its own CDP in 2000 census data.

Through the Program Office staff's anecdotal knowledge of the region, some of the ACS data appear doubtful or incomplete. In some cases, DWR lists a community as a DAC on its

mapping tool but also shows that the population and/or MHI data are not available for that community (see Pearsonville or Valley Wells CDP as examples in the above table). In other cases, DWR shows a community to be a DAC when the known reality is different (meaning that it is not a DAC; Aspen Springs and McGee Creek are two examples). In addition, some communities that are most likely DACs (such as Big Pine) have MHIs that are too high to be considered a DAC by the legislative definition. Finally, not all communities, especially in rural areas, show up in Census or ACS estimates, or communities may be lumped together into one Census Designated Place (e.g., Topaz, Coleville, and Walker have been lumped as Antelope Valley in the past). These difficulties in finding Census and/or ACS data for every community in the Inyo-Mono region bring into question the efficacy of relying on such data to define DACs. Although we now have an updated list of DACs in the Inyo-Mono region using more recent data, staff will continue to look into alternative ways of defining DACs. Such an alternative definition may be quantitative, qualitative, or a combination.

A more thorough analysis of the data used to identify DACs in the Inyo-Mono region can be found in Chapter 1 of the Inyo-Mono IRWM Phase II Plan (<http://inyo-monowater.org/inyo-mono-irwm-plan-2/inyo-mono-irwm-plan/>).

Outreach conducted in the Inyo-Mono region through the DAC grant

A main emphasis of the DAC grant is to conduct outreach to DACs throughout the region to learn more about why DACs do or do not participate in the IRWM planning process. Having the Inyo-Mono IRWM region as one of the grant recipients provides a case study for DAC participation in a rural, mountainous, headwaters region. Lessons learned from DAC involvement in our region may help others improve their outreach to and participation of DACs.



Although the Program Office staff was already fairly well experienced in doing outreach, we chose to bring in an outside consultant to provide an outreach training specific to DACs. Our trainer was Maria Elena Kennedy of Kennedy Consultants, a consultant specializing in outreach to DACs. Maria primarily works with the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority IRWMP and the Greater Los Angeles IRWMP. The training was held over two days in Mammoth Lakes, CA, in February of 2012. Maria brought with her substantial experience, including lessons learned,

in working with DACs in southern California. She emphasized that working with DACs can be much different than working with more affluent communities. There may be cultural or language barriers, and by their very nature, it is difficult for working families to participate in daytime outreach meetings or meetings that are far from their community. Ms. Kennedy’s training provided an additional suite of tools for staff to use when reaching out to and visiting DACs. In addition to Program Office staff, several Members of the Inyo-Mono Regional Water Management Group attended the training. At the end of the session, it was suggested by some of the participants that those attending the training become a kind of technical advisory committee to the Program Office for matters related to the DAC grant.

As discussed above, a substantial outreach effort was undertaken during the early stages of the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program. Some of this outreach involved DACs and tribes. The focus of the outreach done through the DAC grant was to contact those DACs with which we have had little or no contact in the past. Although we have had some success in reaching these communities and have held a few meetings (see Table 2 below), we are finding that additional effort is yielding diminishing returns. One explanation may be that many of these DACs are particularly small and isolated communities (e.g., Darwin, Keeler, Searles Valley) with little organizational structure for participating in something like an IRWM Program. We also find that some small desert communities do not want to participate in collaborative water planning and would prefer to be left alone. Therefore, while staff will continue to reach out to DACs in order to learn more about their water-related concerns and help them to find resources to address those concerns, staff will put energy into ensuring that those DACs that are already involved in the process stay involved and are getting the resources they need.

Table 2. Outreach meetings conducted within the DAC grant.

Disadvantaged Community	Date of Meeting
Benton Paiute Tribe	January, 2012
Bridgeport Public Utilities District ¹	February, 2012
Big Pine Community Services District ¹	February, 2012
Paiute-Shoshone Coalition for Protection of Aboriginal Lands Inter-Tribal Meeting	March, 2012
Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee (serves Lee Vining and Mono City)	June, 2012
Bridgeport Regional Planning Advisory Committee	July, 2012
Tri-Valley Groundwater Management District	July, 2012

¹Bridgeport and Big Pine are not considered DACs according to 2006-2010 ACS MHI estimates. Bridgeport has had a third-party income survey completed for the community to prove it is a DAC in order to apply for a California Department of Public Health Grant. The jurisdiction of the Big Pine Community Services District is different than the Big Pine Census Designated Place. It is likely that the community of Big Pine CSD customers is a DAC.

Despite the size of our IRWM region, we have found many common issues among DACs that are geographically isolated from one another. Water quality and water supply reliability are two major concerns encountered in most Inyo-Mono DACs. Many communities have old and/or outdated infrastructure and need improvements and upgrades to (1) comply with new regulations, such as metering, (2) meet water quality standards, and (3) improve overall

reliability and efficiency of the system. Many of the communities in the region that depend on groundwater are subject to contamination of their water from natural constituents, such as arsenic and uranium. Treating water to drinking-level standards in these communities often requires costly water treatment infrastructure and distribution systems.

What has been perhaps more surprising, however, are the commonalities among Inyo-Mono DACs with respect to managing water resources. Small community water systems typically have governing boards made up of volunteers. Board members usually have “day jobs” and are not able to devote a great deal of time to the water system. If there is a paid staff, it usually consists of a water operator and/or an administrator, though not all water systems employ these two positions. Other common challenges faced by small community water systems include lack of technical expertise and ability to develop grant applications, limited income, and limited knowledge of policies and regulations such as CEQA, groundwater monitoring requirements, water quality regulations, and Proposition 218 (Right to Vote on Taxes Act – 1996).

While commonalities exist, each Inyo-Mono DAC in our region is a unique community facing unique challenges. Some communities rely solely on groundwater; others use a combination of pumped water and surface water. A few communities are able to minimally treat their water, while other communities are required to implement costly projects to remove persistent contaminants such as arsenic and uranium. Climatic differences among communities result in different types and timing of water demand. Finally, different types of water systems – for example, community service districts vs. mutual water companies – may be subject to different requirements. Yet all water systems, whether they serve a disadvantaged community or not, strive to provide safe drinking water and/or effective wastewater management to their customers. Furthermore, a good number of homeowners in the eastern Sierra maintain their own wells and septic systems. The Inyo-Mono IRWM Program has not yet developed a means by which to work with individual well owners, but we recognize that these people represent a sizable portion of the population in the region and may face similar issues with respect to water quality and supply as small water systems.

Outreach conducted outside the Inyo-Mono region through the DAC grant

Another objective of the grant is to understand if water-related concerns of DACs within the Inyo-Mono IRWM region are unique to the region, or if these (or similar) concerns are shared with similar types of regions that have a substantial number of DACs. The intention was for Inyo-Mono Program Office staff to travel to other IRWM regions to meet with RWMG representatives and/or DACs (e.g., a community that is not part of the RWMG). We chose to focus on Sierra Nevada IRWM groups because of their similarities to the Inyo-Mono region with respect to rural communities, sparse population, headwaters/source water watersheds, and natural resource-based economies. Inyo-Mono Program Office staff worked with staff from the Sierra Nevada Alliance to identify and reach out to Sierra IRWMPs to inquire about and gauge

interest in meeting. The goal was to visit three IRWM regions. Some Sierra IRWMPs were just forming and were not ready to talk specifically about DACs. Finally, staff found enough interest to coordinate three separate trips. Within the span of these trips, Inyo-Mono staff was able to talk with representatives from seven regions. A list of the meetings that took place is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. DAC outreach meetings conducted outside of the Inyo-Mono IRWM region.

Name of Organization	Associated IRWM Region	Date of Meeting	Inyo-Mono Staff Attending
Southern Sierra RWMG (attended a regular meeting)	Southern Sierra	September, 2012	Two
Pit River Tribe	(Not yet officially participating in the Upper Pit IRWMP)	October, 2012	One
Burney Water District	Upper Pit	October, 2012	Four
Fall River Mills Community Services District	Upper Pit	October, 2012	Four
Modoc County	Upper Pit	October, 2012	Four
Three independent consultants who facilitate RWMGs	Upper Pit and CABY (Cosumnes, American, Bear, Yuba)	October, 2012	Four
Yosemite-Mariposa RWMG (attended a regular meeting)	Yosemite-Mariposa	October, 2012	One
Mariposa RCD & CCP facilitator	Yosemite-Mariposa	October, 2012	One
Provost & Pritchard (consultants)	Merced	October, 2012	One
Coarsegold Resource Conservation District (watershed coordinator)	Madera	October, 2012	One
Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribe	Tuolumne-Stanislaus	October, 2012	One

Two staff members visited the Southern Sierra IRWMP during one of its regular RWMG meetings in Visalia, CA, in September, 2012. Inyo-Mono staff presented general information about the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program and specific information pertaining to the DAC project. Southern Sierra RWMG participants asked several questions of Inyo-Mono staff relating to grant applications, funding received, and DACs. Inyo-Mono staff plans to follow up on that meeting by scheduling another visit to the region and meeting specifically with DACs and those in the IRWMP who do outreach to DACs.

Three Inyo-Mono Program Office staff members and one Sierra Nevada Alliance staff member traveled to the Upper Pit IRWM region in October, 2012. The focus of this trip was four meetings with RWMG participants, all of which are DACs. In fact, every population center in the Upper Pit region falls within the DAC definition. The area has faced a significant economic downturn because of changes in resource extraction industries. Similar to the Inyo-Mono region, the water resources in the Upper Pit region are important not only to the communities in

the region, but to millions of downstream users as well. The Pit River contributes 30% of the flow of the Sacramento River. The Upper Pit IRWM region faces similar issues to the Inyo-Mono IRWM region in terms of wanting to protect headwaters watersheds and communities while realizing the needs of downstream users as well.



The two water agencies and one county representative with whom we met in the Upper Pit region expressed concern that community members are not engaged in water resources management and planning. Some even used the term “apathetic”, which increases the burden on water managers trying to improve infrastructure or find funding for projects. Several water managers talked about the role of governing boards in community water management and planning. They expressed that governing boards make decisions that can

have significant positive or negative impacts on their communities and are always under pressure to keep rates, fees and charges low. Board members struggle to fully comprehend and understand complicated issues like IRWM given the limited time frame available to them to gain that knowledge prior to making decisions. In terms of participation in the IRWMP, the

entities with which we met attributed their involvement, and the involvement of many others, to a county supervisor who championed the IRWMP early on. This influence clearly helped to shape the IRWMP. The Upper Pit RWMG has also faced challenges from the Tea Party, which is an organized force in the area. Tea Party members have attended and disrupted meetings with concerns of government intrusion into water resources. One person cited the Tea Party as the reason that some do not get involved in the IRWMP effort.



The one Native American tribe in the area is cautiously beginning to participate in the IRWMP. Tribal members and staff have concerns about the IRWMP process conflicting with its tribal sovereignty. It also seems that the eleven “bands” of the tribe in the Upper Pit region do not always agree or come across with a unified voice.

The next week, one Inyo-Mono staff member visited the Yosemite-Mariposa IRWM region. She first attended a Yosemite-Mariposa RWMG meeting, at which she met several Yosemite-Mariposa IRWM stakeholders and presented information on the Inyo-Mono DAC project. That afternoon, she met with the lead agency of the Yosemite-Mariposa IRWMP as well as

representatives of the Madera and Merced IRWMPs. All three IRWM regions include many disadvantaged communities. Yosemite-Mariposa has had difficulty getting tribal participation because of the sovereignty issue. Yosemite-Mariposa staff has recently met with the tribe to discuss its possible participation. Again, all three IRWM regions are headwaters watersheds for water resources that are important locally as well as for downstream users. For the most part, the largest concerns in these western Sierra watersheds are wildfires and non-point source pollution originating from agriculture.

All three IRWM representatives cited challenges relating to the DACs in their regions. There are language barriers because of the large Latino populations in the area, though not all DACs in the regions are Latino. Lack of Internet access is common, as well as poor cell phone coverage. The Yosemite-Mariposa staff, in particular, expressed a need to do more outreach. Much of this would be a second round, but they think it is necessary to contact many groups a second time. The IRWM representatives agreed that the MHI-based definition of DACs does not adequately represent the total disadvantage in their regions, although they had not yet thought about alternative metrics.



During the same trip, the Inyo-Mono staff member met with Environmental Program staff for the Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribe, which is a relatively new participant in the Tuolumne-Stanislaus IRWMP. The tribe is hesitant to sign an MOU with other Tuolumne-Stanislaus RWMG participants because of potential threats to its sovereignty. Such sovereignty issues were not discussed further during this meeting, but they will be further explored in future stakeholder and group meetings. However, tribal staff has participated in IRWMP meetings for about one year. She indicated that an organization that is supposed to represent DAC issues and concerns with the IRWMP rarely participates; thus, it is important for the tribe to attend to represent its own interests. This staff member emphasized that person-to-person contact is key when doing outreach to tribes. Furthermore, she recommended making contact with the tribal chairperson (or other tribal councilmembers) as being crucial to involving tribes

in the IRWM process.

Inyo-Mono IRWMP staff found many similarities between the Inyo-Mono region and the other Sierra/headwaters IRWM regions with which we met, which are summarized in Table 4 below. These other regions also have a large proportion of DACs, many of which are lacking resources to adequately plan for and manage their water systems. We found similarities in managers of small water districts describing (1) a lack of interest and involvement in water management by

their ratepayers, and (2) a lack of interest and knowledge in many of their board members. Stakeholders in these regions have similar general concerns regarding limited availability of water resources because of water rights related to exports from the region and downstream use. These regions, including the Inyo-Mono, are some of the sources of the major rivers (Sacramento, San Joaquin, Owens) feeding water imports for California’s urban and agricultural areas.

We found both similarities and differences in why disadvantaged communities and tribes participate in the IRWM planning process. Meetings of the Upper Pit RWMG have been disrupted by people voicing concerns about the IRWM Program taking away water rights and instituting additional regulation. Although Inyo-Mono RWMG meetings have not been disrupted in the same way, staff has found opposition to the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program based on similar concerns. The Yosemite-Mariposa region has been challenged in its outreach efforts to encourage smaller water districts to participate in the IRWM Program. Similar to the Inyo-Mono region, many of these water districts are governed by volunteer boards and employ a contract water operator.

A major disparity that we have seen between the Inyo-Mono region and other regions relates to tribal involvement in the IRWMP process, particularly for tribes that are federally recognized. Many other IRWM regions have had difficulty involving tribes because of tribes’ own reluctance. Some tribes view the IRWM Program as a potential threat to their sovereignty. They are concerned that being involved with the IRWM Program and receiving Prop. 84 funding will bind them to abide by laws and regulations not recognized by the tribe. Indeed, there have been such concerns within both the North Coast and Inyo-Mono IRWMPs, and the inquiry has been made to DWR as to whether tribes must comply with rules and regulations required by Prop. 84. DWR has responded that tribes must indeed comply with such rules and regulations. Whether or not such compliance will actually impact use of Prop. 84 funds by tribes is unknown. Nevertheless, this concern poses a barrier to full tribal involvement in the process. The Inyo-Mono RWMG has been fortunate thus far in that virtually all of the tribes in the region have found the benefits of participation in the IRWMP to outweigh the costs or risks. We hope that the tribes in the Inyo-Mono region can help encourage and facilitate participation of tribes in other IRWM regions.

Table 4. Summary of similarities and differences found between the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program and other Sierra-DAC IRWM Programs through outreach meetings

	Inyo-Mono	Upper Pit	Yosemite-Mariposa	Madera	Merced	Tuolumne-Stanislaus	Southern Sierra
Local economies dependent upon volatile industries, such as tourism and resource extraction	x	x	x				
Consistent involvement by local elected officials in		x	x				

	Inyo-Mono	Upper Pit	Yosemite-Mariposa	Madera	Merced	Tuolumne-Stanislaus	Southern Sierra
RWMG activities, including assisting with outreach to stakeholders							
Ongoing outreach needed to reach new stakeholders and members of the public	X	X	X				
Significant portion of surface water and/or groundwater resources are exported to downstream and/or urban areas	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Opposition to IRWM planning from organized groups such as the Tea Party, which has discouraged IRWM participation by some stakeholders		X					
Desire to educate downstream water users about protecting headwaters portion of watersheds and local communities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lack of participation by area Native American Indian tribes, largely because of concerns related to tribal sovereignty		X	X			X	
Governing boards of small water districts lack knowledge and need training	X	X					
Reticence of water system governing boards to increase water and wastewater rates	X	X					
Water resource issue: Wildfire and its effect on water supply and water quality	X		X			X	X
Water resource issue: Agricultural practices and their effects on water quality is a major issue	X	X	X				
Language barriers in Latino DACs prevent their involvement in the IRWMP process			X	X	X		
Lack of internet access and poor cell phone coverage	X		X				
Observation that MHI-based definition of DACs does not adequately cover the true disadvantage in local communities	X		X	X	X		
Large proportion of communities in IRWM region are DACs	X	X	X	X	X		
Lack of interest among public to participate in water resources planning and management		X	X				
Outreach and engagement of small community water systems, especially those with volunteer boards and little or no staff, is challenging	X	X	X				

Lessons Learned

1. IRWM regions, and the water issues they address, need better public relations and higher visibility in the media.

2. Boards of directors of small water systems would benefit from training on such topics as rate structures, Proposition 218, and grant proposal development.
3. Several meetings may be required to engage new communities and involve them in the IRWM process. IRWM is a complex concept to explain to new stakeholders, and it is important to follow up from meetings to answer questions and provide additional information.
4. It is important to recognize that outreach to and engagement of Native American tribes should not be “lumped in” with outreach to DACs. IRWM groups need to use outreach and communication techniques appropriate for tribal stakeholders. These might include in-person communications, reaching out to tribal council members, and regular follow-up communications.
5. Disadvantage can mean more than low income. There are other socioeconomic and cultural factors to consider when characterizing DACs and working to make resources available.

Next Steps

The Inyo-Mono IRWM Program Office staff will continue to conduct outreach to area DACs as opportunities arise. A major focus of the second half of the grant will be investigating alternative metrics for defining DACs based on these outreach findings.

This report will be circulated among DACs and tribes in the Inyo-Mono region and neighboring IRWM regions to validate the findings and gather additional information about DAC engagement in the IRWM process.

Appendix

Disadvantaged Community Involvement in the Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program, 2008-2011

The Inyo-Mono IRWM Program began in early 2008 as envisioned by a few forward-thinking stakeholders in Inyo and Mono Counties in response to a need for collaborative water planning in the region and opportunities available through the recently-passed Proposition 84. The goal of the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program has always been to have an open, collaborative, and inclusive process, recognizing the specific and unique needs of various types of stakeholders, including disadvantaged communities (DACs) and Native American Tribes.

Public involvement and outreach

Any member of the public who is interested in water issues within the Inyo-Mono IRWM region is welcome to participate in the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program. Initial outreach in 2008 was primarily directed towards engaging stakeholders to be fully involved in the pre-planning



process. At all times, Inyo-Mono Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) meetings have been open to the public, and notices of the meetings are publicly available on the website

(www.inyomonowater.org) and in local media outlets. Throughout 2008, 2009, and 2010, Inyo-Mono Project Staff and other stakeholder volunteers attended numerous public meetings throughout the planning region, with the dual purpose of identifying additional stakeholders for the RWMG as well as providing basic information about the Inyo-Mono IRWMP

to members of the public. In 2010 and 2011, Program Staff, with the assistance of a facilitator, held a series of public meetings specifically about the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program. These meetings were held throughout the region and during evening hours in order to attract as many members of the public as possible. A primary goal of these outreach efforts has been to identify and reach out to the more remote and rural communities within the region as well as to economically disadvantaged communities (DACs), fully recognizing that in many instances these two types of communities overlap.

Because of the size of the region, it has been difficult to reach every potentially affected stakeholder or community. However, it has been the priority of the Inyo-Mono RWMG from its inception to maintain an open, transparent, and inclusive process. The emphasis in these outreach efforts is to inform members of the public about the funding opportunities and other resources available for addressing local and regional water needs and to stress that the IRWM

Program can increase local participation in water management issues.

Disadvantaged Communities

Defining Disadvantaged Community

Based on legislation, a disadvantaged community in California is defined as a community with an annual median household income (MHI) that is less than 80% of the statewide annual MHI.¹ The statewide annual MHI in California in 1999 was \$47,493. Communities with annual MHIs that are below \$37,994 (2000 Census) are considered disadvantaged communities. To begin identifying disadvantaged areas in the I-M IRWM planning region, the MHI was compared at the census tract level using 2000 Census data. Seventeen census tracts within the region, for which census data were available, qualify as disadvantaged communities (Table 1). Census data were not available for all communities as some are too small to provide information without identifying individual people. Identified disadvantaged communities are displayed in Figure 1. The DACs in the I-M IRWMP planning region include incorporated and unincorporated communities in Inyo, Mono, and Kern Counties, as well as federally-recognized and non-federally-recognized American Indian Tribes.

In 1999, the MHI for the whole of Inyo County (the second largest county in California) was \$35,006, which is below the statewide MHI. Eleven communities in Inyo County qualify as disadvantaged; two communities, Darwin and Tecopa, have MHI levels that are below the federal poverty level (\$16,600) (Table 1). All of the Native American Indian Reservations for which census data are available, excluding Fort Independence, qualify as disadvantaged communities. The combined population of the disadvantaged communities in Inyo County in 1999 was 9,496, representing 53% of the total county population. Population growth in Inyo County was slow relative to other counties in California (2.1% from 2000 to 2003), and ranked 41st of 58 California counties for population growth.

The MHI for Mono County in 1999 (\$44,992) was higher than Inyo County but still below the statewide MHI. Four of the communities in Mono County (for which census data are available) qualify as disadvantaged, accounting for 15% (1,929) of the total population of Mono County. Two of these communities are American Indian Reservations or Colonies, which have MHIs below the poverty level (Benton Paiute Reservation [\$11,875] and Bridgeport Indian Colony [\$13,750]) (Table 1). The population of Mono County (2000) was 12,853; it is one of the slowest growing counties in the state (ranking 47th of 58 counties). Mammoth Lakes, located at the foot of Mammoth Mountain, is the only incorporated town in Mono County.

For both Kern and San Bernardino Counties, only one community within the planning region (Inyokern, of Kern County) qualifies as disadvantaged.

Although the 2000 census data have provided an initial list of DACs within the Inyo-Mono planning region which has been helpful for outreach efforts, it is important to use more recent

¹ State of California legislation AB-1747 (2003).

data to reflect the current status of DACs in the region. The intention was to use MHI data from the 2010 Census to update the list of DACs in the region; however, it was recently discovered that MHI data were not collected as part of the 2010 census. A primary task of the Program Staff will be to research and implement alternative means of identifying DACs.

Outreach Efforts to Disadvantaged Communities

From the beginning of the Inyo-Mono IRWMP process in early 2008, the RWMG made outreach to disadvantaged communities (DACs) a high priority. It was quickly recognized that due to the rural and remote nature of the region, there would likely be a large number of DACs, and this was supported by the data as explained above.

Throughout the pre-planning and planning phases, effort has been made to reach out to DACs, inform them of IRWMP activities, objectives, and resources, and more importantly, listen to their water-related needs and concerns. IRWMP staff has targeted outreach to DACs both with individual meetings/presentations and through the larger public outreach campaign implemented in 2010 and 2011. Of those identified as DACs in Table 1 below, all have received some level of outreach and information from the IRWMP, and many have signed the MOU or remain on the RWMG contact list. The I-M RWMG has recognized that the success of the IRWMP effort in the region cannot be fully realized without the participation of DACs. Indeed, inclusion of DACs into the process helps to provide a stronger voice in support of the needs of rural communities.

As the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program Office began to undertake outreach efforts to DACs and small water systems, it quickly became apparent that special considerations are necessary to successfully engage with these entities. While some DACs, such as Tribes, typically have staff members who can hold meetings during weekdays, members of many other DACs and small water systems work during the day and are therefore only available to meet during evenings. Thus, targeted outreach meetings were tailored to accommodate these schedules.

Over the first years of outreach efforts, staff also learned how to more appropriately present information about the Inyo-Mono IRWM Program to small water systems and DACs. In many cases, a formal Powerpoint presentation was not as effective as simply providing some basic handouts and verbally describing the program and its benefits. Over time, the Program Office has learned what information is of most interest to new entities. For example, groups often want to know what other stakeholders are involved in the Inyo-Mono RWMG. They are also very interested in funding opportunities and other available resources, such as technical trainings and engineering assistance, as they typically have limited resources to make improvements in their water systems without outside assistance.

The Program Office has also found that, in the case of DACs, Tribes, and small water systems, it is important to meet with these entities individually rather than trying to convene multiple entities in one meeting in a centralized location. One reason for this, as expressed by representatives of DACs themselves, is that community representatives may not have the resources to travel to a public outreach meeting, particularly if it is far away from their

community (given the large nature of the Inyo-Mono region). Also, because of the large and varied nature of the region, the issues and concerns of DACs, while there are some commonalities, tend to be individualized, and it is important to give specific attention to each individual community's interests and issues. Thus, through this DAC grant, the Program Office will be able to travel to individual communities and meet with representatives on a schedule that is convenient for them.

Table 1. Identified disadvantaged communities in the Inyo-Mono IRWM planning region based on 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data.

Community	Population²	Median household income	MOU Signatory?	Targeted Outreach?
Inyo County	17,945	\$35,006	Yes	
<i>Big Pine</i>	1,350	\$37,115	No	<i>Needed</i>
<i>Big Pine Paiute Reservation</i>	428	\$25,938	Yes	Yes
<i>Bishop</i>	3,575	\$27,338	No	<i>Needed</i>
<i>Bishop Paiute Reservation</i>	1,445	\$26,591	Yes	Yes
<i>Cartago</i>	109	\$34,375	No	<i>Needed</i>
<i>Darwin</i>	54	\$13,333	No	<i>Needed</i>
<i>Furnace Creek</i>	31	\$25,625	No	<i>Needed</i>
<i>Independence (county seat)</i>	574	\$37,500	No	<i>Needed</i>
<i>Lone Pine</i>	1,655	\$29,079	No	<i>Needed</i>
<i>Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation</i>	176	\$18,500	Yes	Yes
<i>Tecopa</i>	99	\$12,344	Yes	<i>More needed</i>
<i>Trona</i>	1,988	\$35,952	No	<i>Needed</i>
Mono County	12,853	\$44, 992	Yes	
<i>Antelope Valley³</i>	1,498	\$34,584	No	Yes
<i>Benton</i>	331	\$26,250	No	Yes
<i>Benton Paiute Reservation</i>	53	\$11,875	No	<i>Needed</i>
<i>Bridgeport Indian Colony</i>	47	\$13,750	Yes	Yes
San Bernardino County	1,709,434	\$42,066	No	

² Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1. Data from the US Census Bureau was accessed using the American Factfinder feature on the Census website. Census data is reported by a variety of geographic units, including census tracts, block groups, blocks, and zip codes.

³ Antelope Valley is located at the northern end of Mono County and includes the communities of Walker, Coleville, and Topaz, the Marine housing complex at Coleville, and Camp Antelope at Walker.

Community	Population²	Median household income	MOU Signatory?	Targeted Outreach?
Kern County	661,645	\$35,446	No	
<i>Inyokern</i>	984	\$35,046	No	<i>More needed</i>

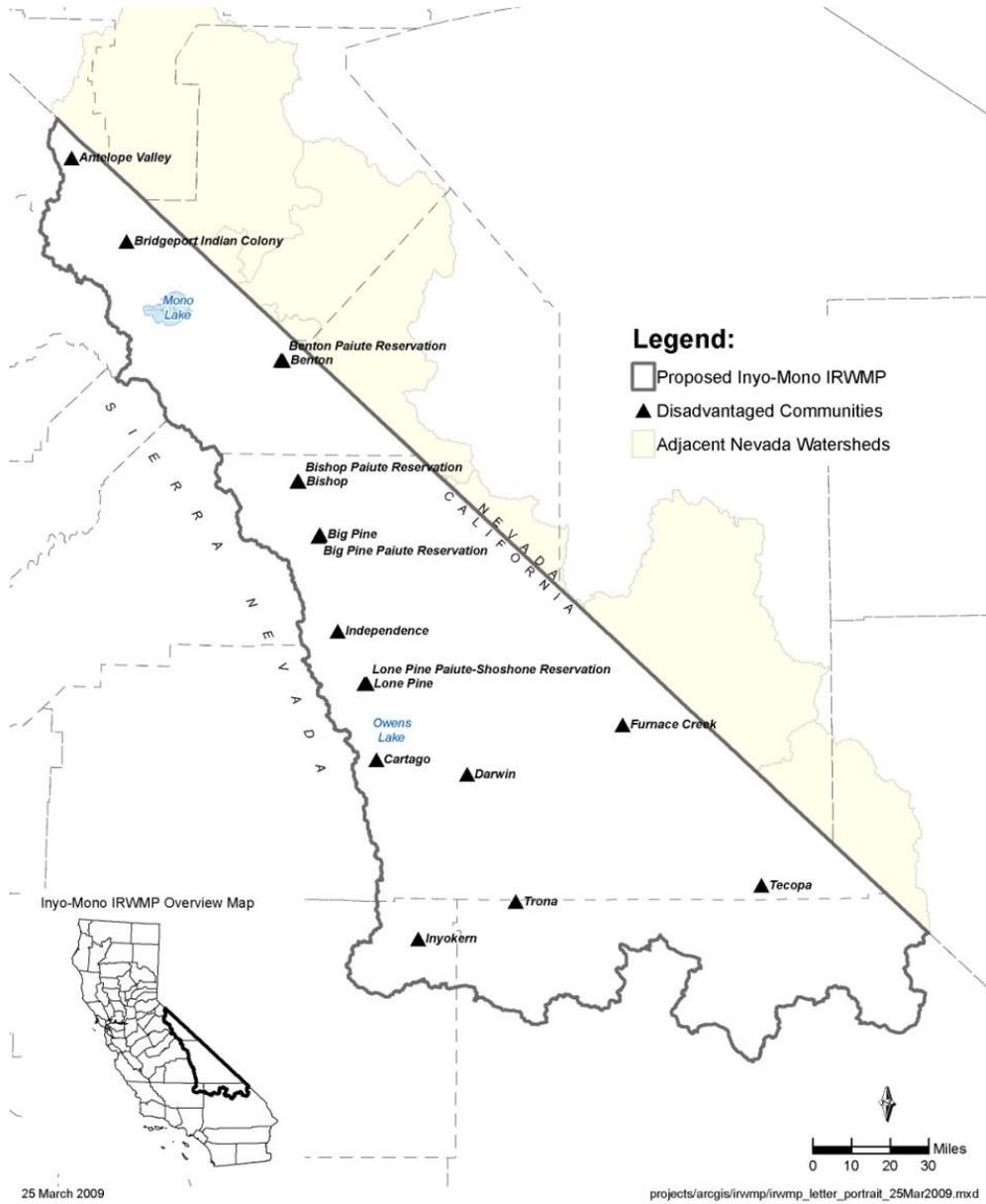


Figure 1. Disadvantaged communities in the Inyo-Mono planning region, as determined from 2000 U.S. Census data.