

3 Planning Process

3.1 Role of the Northern California Water Association

NCWA continues working with water purveyors and other water interests to refine the integrated water management program for the Sacramento Valley. NCWA represents more than 70 water districts and agencies, water companies, and individual water rights holders with senior rights and entitlements to the surface waters of the Sacramento Valley. NCWA's members also have overlying and appropriative water rights to groundwater resources throughout Northern California. These water suppliers and individual landowners irrigate more than 900,000 acres of fertile Northern California farmland, provide water for six NWRs and various other managed wetlands, and meet the local municipal and domestic water needs in the region.

NCWA members also include local governments, counties, and the business leadership in the region. These local entities have been actively involved in developing the Sacramento Valley IRWMP, as described below. NCWA is also the administrator for the Northern California Joint Exercise of Powers (JEP), a joint exercise of powers among 17 public entities in Northern California.

3.2 IRWMP Development and Refinement

The Sacramento Valley IRWMP is a dynamic and iterative process that has and will continue to build on the numerous partnerships throughout the Sacramento Valley to improve water supplies for farms, cities, rural communities, fish, birds, and recreation. The Sacramento Valley IRWMP contains a strategic framework to meet the various water supply needs in the region – both now and into the future. More specifically, it builds on the various IRWMP elements that have been adopted throughout the region and many other programs that will be adopted in the future.

The Sacramento Valley IRWMP development began during the 1987 to 1994 drought that dramatically affected the Sacramento Valley. During this time, certain water users were enjoined from diverting water for use in the Sacramento Valley, and many others received only 25 percent of their water supply entitlement. As numerous partnerships were formed and mobilized during the 1990s, to address the drought, the regional water management concept was formalized in December 2000, when the NCWA Board of Directors adopted a strategy for an Integrated Water Management and Water Supply Program for the Sacramento Valley. This strategy was developed by the water districts and companies, counties, and many others throughout the Sacramento Valley. Since that time, numerous regional and local

efforts have been undertaken that are incorporated in the Sacramento Valley IRWMP, including the following:

- **Basinwide Water Management Plan.** In January 1997, 10 water right settlement contractors in the Sacramento Valley executed an MOU with Reclamation and the Department to develop regional water management solutions on the west side of the Sacramento Valley. The MOU avoided litigation with the U.S. Department of the Interior and ultimately led to the Basinwide Water Management Plan completed in December 2004.
- **Bay-Delta Stay Agreement.** With NCWA as a signatory, Sacramento Valley water users entered an agreement with state and federal agencies (including the Department and Reclamation) and export water users to stay the SWRCB's Bay-Delta Phase 8 proceedings and to develop a cooperative water management partnership to help meet local water supplies and water quality objectives in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Rivers Delta. As a result, the SWRCB adopted Water Right Order 2001-05 to stay the Phase 8 water rights proceedings.
- **Sacramento Valley Water Management Agreement.** In December 2002, more than 40 Sacramento Valley water districts and companies executed and thus adopted a Short-Term Settlement Agreement, building on the effort initiated by the Bay-Delta Stay Agreement, described above. This integrated program for the Sacramento Valley was also executed by state and federal agencies (the Department, DFG, Reclamation, and the Service) and water users from throughout the state. A significant part of this effort was the development of short and long-term work plans to develop the projects under this agreement. The SVWMA led to the dismissal of the Phase 8 Bay-Delta proceedings by SWRCB order in January 2003.
- **Redding Basin Water Resources Management Plan.** In September 1996, the Redding Area Water Council, in conjunction with the Shasta County Water Agency, began a multi-phased water resource plan. The first phase looked at water use in Shasta County and made land and water use projections to 2030. The council adopted the *Redding Basin Groundwater Management Plan* (the product of Phases 2A and 2B) in November 1998, and in August 2003, completed the *Redding Basin Water Resources Plan* (Phase 2C), which describes the present and future water resources available in the Redding Groundwater Basin and presents alternatives for conjunctive management and more efficient water management. A programmatic EIR is now being prepared to select a preferred alternative for managing water in the Redding Groundwater Basin.
- **Regional Water Use Efficiency Program.** In 2004, NCWA, working with water users in the Sacramento Valley and the CALFED agencies, developed a regional water use efficiency program for the Sacramento Valley that encourages local agencies to undertake measures to improve water use efficiency on a regional basis. This program

has formed the basis for water management plans that will meet TBs for water use efficiency in the region.

- **Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition.** In October 2004, NCWA entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with 10 subwatersheds throughout Northern California to formalize the Coalition. This Coalition was formed to enhance and improve water quality in the Sacramento River watershed (Sacramento River Basin, Region 5a) while sustaining the economic viability of agriculture, functional values of managed wetlands, and sources of safe drinking water. The Coalition is the entity that has Water Board approval to implement the watershed program under the Irrigated Lands Program, and it is implementing the *Diazinon Management Plan* under the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Sacramento-Feather Rivers.
- **Butte Integrated Water Resources Program.** The Butte County Board of Supervisors on May 24, 2005, adopted the Butte IWRP to coordinate local water resource management and to improve water management and resource protection in the county. This Butte IWRP provides the tools for the county and its DW&RC to support proactive water management.
- **Yuba-Sutter Regional Recycled Water Master Plan.** Yuba City, the City of Marysville, and Linda County Water District have signed an MOU and are conducting joint feasibility studies and master planning to develop a regional recycled water program.
- **Ongoing planning.** Various other efforts are underway throughout the region and will be incorporated into the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. This includes IRWMP development within Yolo and Yuba Counties under the Proposition 50 planning process. These efforts involve extensive technical studies and planning work to address water management challenges of Yuba and Yolo Subbasins. Additionally, the Lower Tuscan Coordinating Group is developing various elements to better understand and manage the Lower Tuscan Aquifer in the Northern Sacramento Valley.

3.3 Stakeholder/Public Involvement Process for Sacramento Valley IRWMP

The stakeholder and public involvement process for the Sacramento Valley IRWMP has been tailored for specific elements of the IRWMP, and it will continue to evolve as the IRWMP is refined to include a broader scope of issues and participants. From the outset, the public process has been designed to be transparent, and it has been expanded to reflect the increasing development and refinement of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP and the integration of additional programs and projects into the plan. All of the programs in Section 3.2, IRWMP Development and Refinement, have undergone extensive public processes. The Sacramento Valley IRWMP is considered to be a “living document,” and is expected to be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the Sacramento Valley.

3.3.1 Direct Participants

3.3.1.1 Water Purveyors

The water districts and companies in Northern California hold most of the surface water rights, have developed the infrastructure to deliver and manage water in the region for all purposes, and manage the groundwater supplies, all for the benefit of Northern California. These entities have been working closely together for the past 15 years to promote the economic, social, and environmental viability of Northern California by enhancing and preserving the water rights, supplies, and water quality in the region. Leading up to the adopted Sacramento Valley IRWMP policy in 2000, and since that time, water managers have made a concerted effort to further develop and refine the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. This has included thousands of public meetings by districts and counties throughout the region, and numerous meetings and stakeholder sessions over the past 6 years with water district managers to develop and refine the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. NCWA has monthly Managers Meetings and other special meetings that include water managers throughout the region to focus on various elements of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. An update on the overall progress being made on the Sacramento Valley IRWMP has occurred at the Managers Meetings at least once each quarter for the past 3 years. Invitations to the NCWA Managers Meetings are sent to the managers of more than 71 water purveyors, the 26 members of NCWA's Board of Directors, representatives from county governments in the Sacramento Valley, 32 attorneys representing Sacramento Valley water purveyors, and 38 representatives from engineering and consulting firms working with Sacramento Valley water purveyors.

3.3.1.2 Counties

After actively participating in water discussions over the past decade, counties in the region officially joined NCWA in 2001. This includes supervisor representation on the Board of Directors. With respect to the development of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP, NCWA and others in the region have appeared before the boards of supervisors several times a year to discuss progress being made. In 2005, NCWA met with boards of supervisors in the Sacramento Valley on six separate occasions. The boards of supervisors in eight counties adopted formal resolutions in the spring of 2001, supporting the SVWMA; and in the summer of 2005, they submitted letters of support for the NCWA Proposition 50 applications and the further refinement of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. The Regional Council of Rural Counties has also supported the IRWMP. Importantly, county staff participate in all monthly NCWA Managers Meetings and have been constructive in advancing the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. NCWA has also provided copies of periodic updates and drafts of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP to supervisors throughout the region. On August 30, 2005, for example, a revised draft Sacramento Valley IRWMP was directly sent to all supervisors requesting their input in the program. The comments received have been included in this version of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. In July 2006, another update of the IRWMP was sent to each

supervisor in the Sacramento Valley. Further updates will also seek and include input from boards of supervisors.

3.3.1.3 Conservation Partners

The Sacramento Valley IRWMP development reflects the input and inclusion of a number of conservation partners, including the California Rice Commission, Ducks Unlimited, the California Waterfowl Association, and Natural Heritage Institute. These organizations have been intimately involved with various parts of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP and, particularly, implementation of measures to improve water supplies for the ecosystem (see Section 5, Conservation Strategies). IRWMP participants will continue to seek additional conservation partners as part of the Conservation Strategy and will work with state and federal fisheries and wildlife agencies to implement these programs and projects.

3.3.1.4 Nested Plans

As mentioned in Section 3.2, IRWMP Development and Refinement, the development of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP includes coordination with the preparers and stakeholders involved in various existing and proposed local integrated plans across the valley. The strategies and objectives of these complementary subregional efforts are referenced and summarized in the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. This coordination process includes periodic meetings, the most recent of which was held April 13, 2006.

3.3.2 Coordinated Plans

3.3.2.1 Regional Coordination

The Sacramento Valley IRWMP is partnering with the Regional Water Authority covering the Sacramento metropolitan area and is coordinating the respective IRWMPs being developed within the Sacramento River Hydrologic Region. On December 1, 2005, NCWA and the Regional Water Authority sent a letter to the Department and SWRCB describing efforts to coordinate integrated regional water management activities occurring between the adjacent regions, including semiannual meetings. NCWA and the Regional Water Authority have met in December 2005 and May 2006, to discuss integrated regional water management coordination.

As the map on Figure 1-1 shows, the Sacramento Valley IRWMP is also coordinating on various issues of mutual concern with areas in the foothills of the Sacramento River Hydrologic Region. This includes meetings to coordinate plans and, as an example, efforts to improve water quality as part of the Coalition.

3.3.2.2 Federal/State Agencies

Federal and state agencies have been partners in nearly every aspect of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. For example, the Department, DFG, Reclamation, and the Service are

signatories to the SVWMA and have been active partners in nearly all aspects of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. The Department representatives are included in all Sacramento Valley IRWMP public meetings, as well as meetings to develop elements of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP, such as groundwater management.

3.3.2.3 Statewide Partners

Water users in the Bay Area, Southern California, the Santa Clara Valley, and the San Joaquin Valley are parties to the SVWMA and are supportive of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. The Association of California Water Agencies has also formally supported the Sacramento Valley IRWMP as part of its “No Time to Waste: A Blueprint for California Water” (Actions IV and XII) that was published in May 2005.

3.3.3 Outreach and Input Process

3.3.3.1 Interested Parties

A list of interested parties to the Sacramento Valley IRWMP has been compiled by NCWA and will be refined as interest in the Sacramento Valley IRWMP expands. The interested parties will be engaged as new information is developed and will receive periodic updates on progress with the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. This will include opportunities for input and discussion on the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. Interested parties were encouraged to provide comments on the draft IRWMP and were invited to the public meetings and workshops, as discussed below.

3.3.3.2 Notice of Intent

NCWA, as the administrator of JEP, held an initial public hearing on April 17, 2006, to present the proposed approach to the document and obtain public input and comment on content and process. Prior to the meeting, the JEP published a Notice of Intent to prepare an IRWMP pursuant to the specific provisions in the Water Code. This included publication of the notice in the five major newspapers throughout the region 2 weeks prior to the public hearing. After the public hearing, the JEP entities determined to prepare the regional plan in accordance with Water Code Section 10541 and to follow the strict procedures in the Water Code and the public process in Government Code Section 6060 et seq.

3.3.3.3 Release of the IRWMP and Public Workshops/Comments

The draft IRWMP was released for a 45-day public review on August 30, 2006. During the review period, public workshops were held in Colusa on September 5, 2006 and Durham on October 3, 2006. All identified interested parties were emailed a notice of the Colusa meeting on August 15, and a press advisory was sent to the major newspapers in the valley. Notice of the Durham meeting was sent to interested parties on September 13, 2006. Given requests for additional time to review the document, the comment period was extended 14 days to October 30, 2006. Several comments were received on the document in the form of letters

and or emails, some of which included several individual comments, and others were limited to a single recommendation, issue, or suggested revision. The majority of comments focused on concerns related to groundwater monitoring and proposed groundwater production, primarily in Butte County. Those comments that suggested specific changes were addressed through text edits as appropriate, and other portions of the document were revised and/or clarified in response to more general comments. Given the focus on groundwater monitoring and use, Sections 4.1.1, 5.2, and 7.0 of this IRWMP were the primary sections revised in response to comments. A copy of all comments is available upon request from NCWA.

3.3.3.4 Northern Sacramento Valley Water Forum

The Northern Sacramento Valley Water Forum is a group of water interests representing local governments, agriculture, business, and the environment from Shasta, Tehama, Glenn, Butte, Colusa, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties that promotes discussions on water issues relevant to Northern California. The Sacramento Valley IRWMP, or elements of the IRWMP, have been forum topics on several occasions during the past couple of years.

3.3.3.5 Congress/Legislature

NCWA has testified at numerous public hearings regarding the IRWMP and related issues. This has included testimony before the following:

- U.S. Senate on October 30, 2003
- U.S. House of Representatives Water and Power Subcommittee on May 20, 1999; June 30, 2001; July 26, 2001; June 28, 2003; and July 24, 2003
- California Senate Agriculture and Water Resources Committee on February 26, 2002
- California Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee on February 26, 2002 and February 11, 2003

This testimony has focused on the IRWMP and its various components.

3.3.3.6 Environmental Review Process

Many aspects of the IRWMP will follow the procedures under the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Policy Act, including the public processes contained within these laws.

3.3.3.7 Libraries

Copies of the draft and final IRWMP have been provided to public libraries in the region.

3.3.3.8 Web Site

The current version of the IRWMP is available on NCWA's Web site (www.norcalwater.org). Updates to the Sacramento Valley IRWMP, upcoming meetings, and supporting information will also be posted on the Web site.

3.3.4 Disadvantaged Communities

Six of the counties in the region are disadvantaged communities under state law. According to the *Proposal Solicitation Package for Integrated Regional Water Management and Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Planning Grants* (pg. 16), "for the purposes of this grant program, a community is a population of persons residing in the same locality under the same local governance." Because of the expansive geographic size of the region covered by the Sacramento Valley IRWMP, the determination of disadvantaged communities at the county government level best reflects the area that will benefit from the program. The Sacramento Valley IRWMP includes a large area of eight Northern California counties (Figure 1-1 is a map of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region showing the eight counties). Because of this, the designation of disadvantaged community would be best determined using the median household income (MHI) of the counties included in the region. Figure 3-1 is a map of the disadvantaged communities within the Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region.

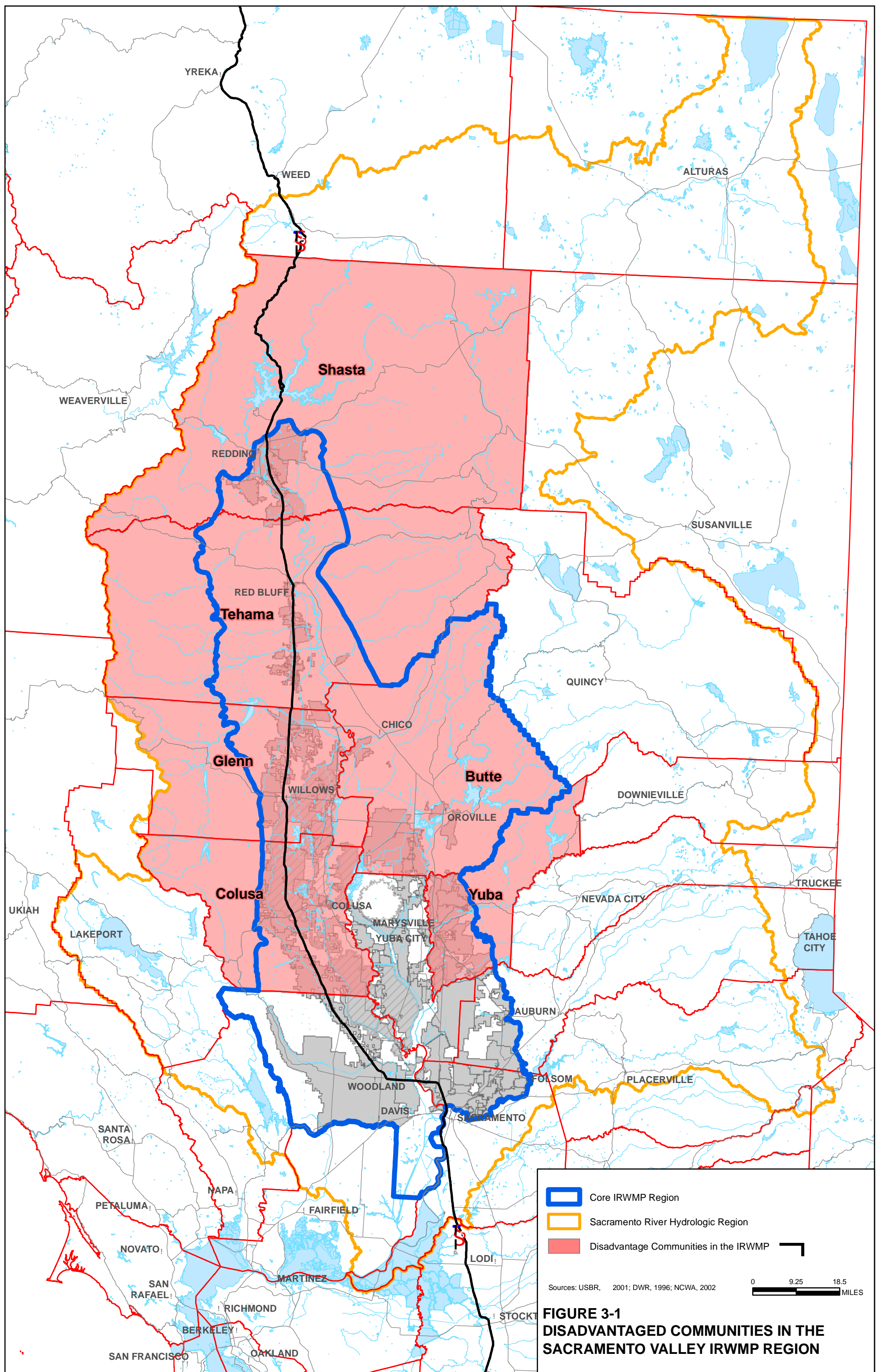
3.3.4.1 Presence of Disadvantaged Communities

The Sacramento Valley IRWMP encompasses Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, Sutter, Tehama, Yolo and Yuba Counties. Table 3-1 shows the MHI of these counties and is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 census data.

All but two of the counties in the Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region qualify as disadvantaged according to MHI. Those two counties are just above the 80 percent threshold. None of the counties in the Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region have an MHI greater than the statewide MHI. The Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region, as a whole, has an MHI that is 73.3 percent of the state MHI.

3.3.4.2 Representation and Participation

Because of the rural nature of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region, counties are, for the most part, the most direct local government connection covering all of the area included in the Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region. Representatives of the eight counties have been involved in the development of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. Meetings were held on February 11, 2005 and March 3, 2005, to discuss the development of the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. In addition, conference calls were conducted with representatives from the eight counties on January 5, February 2, March 2, and April 6, 2005 to discuss the Sacramento Valley IRWMP and other regional issues. This is part of an ongoing coordination effort to further develop the Sacramento Valley IRWMP. All eight counties have submitted letters of



support for the development of this planning grant application. Counties will be represented in the planning process as the Sacramento Valley IRWMP is developed. The subregion IRWMPs developed by specific counties will be nested within the Sacramento Valley IRWMP.

TABLE 3-1
Comparison between Statewide and Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region Median Household Incomes

Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region Counties	Number of Households	Median Household Income	% of Median Household Income
Butte	79,674	\$31,934	67.2
Colusa	6,081	\$35,062	73.8
Glenn	9,197	\$32,107	67.6
Shasta	63,497	\$34,335	72.3
Sutter	27,098	\$38,375	80.8
Tehama	21,090	\$31,206	65.7
Yolo	59,358	\$40,769	85.8
Yuba	20,552	\$30,460	64.1
Sacramento Valley IRWMP Region	286,547	\$34,818	73.3
California	11,502,870	\$47,493	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, census data

3.3.4.3 Benefits and Impacts

The eight counties in the region are experiencing increased and changing water needs resulting from urbanization, environmental water dedications, and other factors. The Sacramento Valley IRWMP will provide the counties with increased flexibility to meet those needs while protecting water rights and the economies they support in the region. In addition, the Sacramento Valley IRWMP provides the macro-level planning that will help to implement the counties' subregional-level water management strategies.