

## 14 Stakeholder Involvement

This section meets the following IRWMP Standard from the Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program Guidelines.

**N. Stakeholder Involvement** – Identify stakeholders included in developing the Plan. Identify how stakeholders were identified, how they participate in planning and implementation efforts, and how they can influence decisions made regarding water management. Include documentation of stakeholder involvement such as inclusion of signatory status or letters of support from non-agency stakeholders, i.e. those who have not “adopted” the Plan. Include a discussion of mechanisms and processes that have been or will be used to facilitate stakeholder involvement and communication during implementation of the Plan. Discuss watershed or other partnerships developed during the planning process. Discuss disadvantaged communities within the region and their involvement in the planning process. Discuss efforts to identify and address environmental justice needs and issues within the region. Identify possible obstacles to Plan implementation.

The Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP process is built upon the premise that future implementation of an IRWMP would not be possible unless the strategies and options were first identified, prioritized and developed by the affected stakeholders. As a result, stakeholder involvement is a central element to the Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP process and implementation success will necessarily involve water management strategies that address the concerns of local communities and reflect the public’s interests and values within the watershed.

Stakeholder involvement is a central element to the Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP process. With this in mind, numerous stakeholder groups throughout the Pajaro River Watershed were identified and contacted, and several public announcements were published in regional newspapers to reach the general public. These outreach efforts were successful in obtaining stakeholder input during the planning process. Stakeholders have participated through various stakeholder meetings and regular correspondence with the Collaborative to develop, influence, and complete the IRWMP. It is anticipated that active stakeholder involvement will continue during implementation of the IRWMP.

### 14.1 Stakeholder Identification

Stakeholders were identified through discussions with local agencies and organizations with jurisdiction, projects, and stakeholder experience in the Pajaro River Watershed. Stakeholders identified to date include those shown in Table 14-1. This list will continue to expand as additional stakeholders are identified during the implementation of the IRWMP. A special effort has been made to identify and involve disadvantaged communities in the region, such as residents of the City of Watsonville, and the county-level disadvantaged communities of Freedom, Pajaro, Paicines, and San Juan Bautista. These communities were encouraged to be actively involved in the planning process and to proactively address environmental justice concerns. Stakeholder meetings were held in locations throughout the watershed to encourage widespread participation and to accommodate stakeholders with limited resources and opportunities to travel to meetings.

The IRWMP process has focused on identifying as broad a range of stakeholders as possible. Previously, stakeholder groups coalesced around project- or community-driven efforts which tended to be more narrowly focused on specific water management strategies developed by various agencies and organizations in the watershed. There is increasing awareness that it is beneficial to integrate the efforts of these stakeholders groups. Catastrophic events, such as Pajaro River flooding, have heightened awareness

of the necessity of local communities to collaborate in developing effective water management strategies throughout the region. Furthermore, stakeholders recognize the need to work together given their shared dependence on limited local water supplies in the watershed. Additionally, stakeholders are already teaming up to maintain water quality levels that meet various beneficial uses by implementing such programs as agricultural water quality and irrigation mitigation programs. Other stakeholders have demonstrated a desire to collaboratively implement environmental restoration and habitat protection in the Pajaro River Watershed. All of these efforts demonstrate willingness to pool resources and act collaboratively to develop water management strategies that provide multiple benefits to the watershed and its communities. The Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP process has created a forum for many of these stakeholders to come together to work collaboratively on their shared and/or overlapping issues. In order to make this forum most effective, steps have been taken to identify as many of the potential stakeholders with water management interests in the Pajaro River Watershed as possible, and to make them aware of the IRWMP process.

**Table 14-1: Stakeholders for Pajaro River IRWMP**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Description of Authority/Interests</b>
Action Pajaro Valley (APV)*	APV was involved in development of the IRWMP document to produce a public- and stakeholder-friendly document with high quality graphics and text. This is critical to the success and public support for the integrated plan.
Agricultural Water Quality Coalition	The Central Coast Agricultural Water Quality Coalition is a partnership of Central Coast growers organized through their county Farm Bureaus. The Coalition is working to identify local water quality threats and learn about economically viable water quality protection practices.
Aromas Water District*	Located on the westerly edge of the PVWMA service area, the Special District provides water treatment and supply service for approximately 750 customers.
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)*	AMBAG was organized for the permanent establishment of a forum for planning, discussion and study of regional problems of mutual interest and concern to the counties and cities in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties; and for the development of studies, plans, policy and action recommendations.
California Coastal Conservancy	The California Coastal Conservancy, established in 1976, is a state agency that uses entrepreneurial techniques to purchase, protect, restore, and enhance coastal resources, and to provide access to the shore. It works in partnership with local governments, other public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners.

Stakeholder	Description of Authority/Interests
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) – Region 3	<p>The Central Coast RWQCB is a regulatory extension of the State Water Resources Control Board, which was established by the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (1969), which became Division Seven ("Water Quality") of the State Water Code. The State Water Code establishes the responsibilities and authorities of the nine RWQCBs (previously called Water Pollution Control Boards) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The federal Clean Water Act (Public Law 92-500, as amended) provides for the delegation of certain responsibilities in water quality control and water quality planning to the states. Where the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the SWRCB have agreed to such delegation, the Regional Boards implement portions of the Clean Water Act, such as the NPDES program and toxic substance control programs.</p> <p>The Central Coast RWQCB coordinates and controls the quality of water in its region through the protection of beneficial uses, the development of water quality objectives to protect the beneficial uses, and implementation planning to accommodate the water quality objectives.</p>
Central Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council	The Central Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council serves South Santa Clara, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties. The council’s activities focus on agritourism, steelhead habitat enhancement, water quality education, coordinated resource management and planning (CRMP) coordination and permit streamlining.
Chamber of Commerce – Pajaro Valley	Chamber of commerce providing service to strengthen the diverse business and agricultural environment, economic climate and quality of life in Watsonville.
Chamber of Commerce - San Benito	Chamber of commerce providing resources for business and individuals within San Benito County.
City of Gilroy	Located in South Santa Clara County, the City of Gilroy provides water service to residences and businesses. Gilroy is a South County Regional Wastewater Authority (SCRWA) Partner which provides wastewater service for the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill.
City of Hollister	The City of Hollister is a major urban service area in San Benito County. The City of Hollister provides various municipal and industrial (M&I) services include wastewater collection and treatment and water supply service.
City of Morgan Hill	Located in South Santa Clara County, the City of Morgan Hill provides water service to residences and businesses. Morgan Hill is a SCRWA Partner that provides wastewater service for the Cities of Morgan Hill and Gilroy.
City of San Juan Bautista	Located in San Benito County, the City of San Juan Bautista provides wastewater and water services. San Juan Bautista is a member of the Water Resource Association of San Benito County.
City of Watsonville*	Major urban service area in the PVWMA service area. City provides various M&I services including wastewater collection and treatment and water supply service.
County of Monterey	County government with land use jurisdiction within its boundaries. The County also manages water and sanitation systems in unincorporated County Service Areas. The south portion of the PVWMA service area is a part of Monterey County.

County of San Benito	County government with land use jurisdiction within its boundaries. A significant portion of the upper Pajaro River watershed (including the San Benito River) is within San Benito County.
County of Santa Clara	County government with land use jurisdiction within its boundaries. A portion of the upper Pajaro River watershed is within Santa Clara County.
County of Santa Cruz	County government with land use jurisdiction within its boundaries and jurisdiction over stormwater, drainage, watershed management, water resources management and water quality protection for the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County. The northern portion of the PVWMA service area is in Santa Cruz County.
Farm Bureaus (Monterey County, San Benito County, Santa Clara County and Santa Cruz County)	The Farm Bureau is organized on a county, state and national basis, with the county Farm Bureaus serving as the core of the organization. Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Clara each have their own Farm Bureau. The Farm Bureau is a voluntary, nongovernmental, nonpartisan organization of farm and ranch families seeking solutions to the problems that affect their lives, both socially and economically.
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County	The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is a community-based nonprofit organization that works cooperatively with land owners, government entities and other organizations to protect and manage lands of significant value.
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS)	The MBNMS mission is to understand and protect the coastal ecosystem of Central California. The MBNMS is an extension of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP). The NMSP mission is to serve as the trustee for the nation's system of marine protected areas, to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural legacy. Its goals are appropriate to the unique diversity contained within individual sites. They may include restoring and rebuilding marine habitats or ecosystems to their natural condition or monitoring and maintaining already healthy areas.
Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA)	MCWRA is a special district formed to manage, protect, and enhance the quantity and quality of water and provide specified flood control services for Monterey County. Their interest is to be a leader in efficient, innovative and equitable water resources management for the County.
Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority (PRWFPA)*	PRWFPA was established in 2000 by the State of California Assembly Bill 807 to identify, evaluate, fund, and implement flood prevention and control strategies in the Pajaro River Watershed, on an intergovernmental basis. Since the Pajaro River Watershed covers an area within four counties (Santa Clara, San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey) and four water districts (Santa Clara Valley Water District; San Benito County Water District; Santa Cruz County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Zone 7; and Monterey County Water Resources Agency), the PRWFPA is comprised of one representative from each of the eight interested agencies. The PRWFPA is a governing body through which each member organization can participate and contribute to finding a method to provide flood protection in the watershed and promote general watershed interests. A further goal is to identify and prioritize strategies and projects that will provide multiple benefits, such as water supply, groundwater recharge, or environmental restoration and protection benefits.

<p>Pajaro/Sunny Mesa Community Services District</p>	<p>A community service district and water supplier for smaller communities in the Pajaro Valley. (Note: Throughout the Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP process, Pajaro/Sunny Mesa Community Services District (PSMCS D) was identified as a watershed stakeholder and has been invited to attend stakeholder gatherings through email announcements provided to the entire stakeholder list of contacts. In addition to these attempts to gain PSMCS D participation, a formal meeting was scheduled in September 2006 where PVWMA met with PSMCS D, at which point PSMCS D declined to participate in the process over concerns that this meeting came too late in the IRWMP development process. Nevertheless, the IRWMP will attempt to take into account the considerations of PSMCS D where possible and will continue outreach efforts during IRWMP implementation.)</p>
<p>Planning and Conservation League Foundation (PCLF)*</p>	<p>The PCLF mission is to ensure that California continues to be an attractive, livable, and equitable state by engaging in cutting-edge environmental public policy research, and educating and empowering local communities to understand and participate in local and state environmental decision making processes. PCLF also produces publications that educate the public about environmental challenges in the areas of planning, natural resource conservation, environmental protection, clean air, clean water, sustainable energy policies, and environmental justice.</p>
<p>Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)*</p>	<p>California RCDs are special districts organized under the state Public Resources Code, Division 9. The RCDs in the Pajaro Watershed are the Santa Cruz RCD, Monterey County RCD, San Benito RCD and Loma Prieta RCD. Each district has a locally elected or appointed volunteer board of directors comprised of landowners in that district. Interests of the RCDs that relate to water management include water quality, wildlife habitat restoration, soil erosion control, and conservation education.</p>
<p>San Benito Agricultural Land Trust</p>	<p>The San Benito Agricultural Land Trust is devoted to providing financial options to landowners in order to protect the agricultural heritage of San Benito County. The Trust can protect land permanently and directly by accepting donations of conservation easements designed to meet the individual needs of landowners.</p>
<p>San Martin Neighborhood Alliance (SMNA)</p>	<p>The mission of the SMNA is to protect San Martin's rural atmosphere, support positive controlled growth, promote neighborhood identity and vitality, ensure an influential voice in the local governing body, and provide members with information so that they can play an active, informed role in finding solutions to our neighborhood concerns.</p>
<p>Santa Clara County Open Space Authority</p>	<p>The Authority is comprised of the cities of Campbell, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, Santa Clara and San Jose, as well as much of the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County. Its mission is the preservation of open space and creation of greenbelts between communities, lands on the valley floor, hillsides, viewsheds and watersheds, baylands and riparian corridors.</p>
<p>Santa Cruz County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Zone 7 (SCCFC&amp;WCD)</p>	<p>District governed by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, City of Watsonville, PVWMA. Provides flood control services to Santa Cruz County except the cities of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Capitola.</p>

Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter	Local chapter of the Sierra Club committed to participating in the a South Santa Clara County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan. The planning area includes the Uvas-Llagas watershed, which is a tributary to the Pajaro River.
Sierra Club, Ventana Chapter	Local chapter of the Sierra Club with interests in preserving the Pajaro River and its watershed through environmental activism.
Silicon Valley Land Conservancy (SVLC)	SVLC is a private non-profit agency that collaborates with other agencies and organizations to protect much of the natural habitat and agricultural land of Silicon Valley. SVLC has acquired, maintained, and preserved almost 1,550 acres in the Silicon Valley.
Soquel Creek Water District	Local government agency that provides water resource management for communities in mid-Santa Cruz County. The district provides water to over 45,000 customers.
South County Regional Wastewater Authority (SCRWA)	SCRWA is the regional wastewater authority for South Santa Clara County, primarily serving the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill. SCRWA has partnered with the Santa Clara Valley Water District to expand water recycling in southern Santa Clara County.
South Valley Streams for Tomorrow	Organization concerned with streams in South Santa Clara County and tributaries of the Pajaro River in Santa Clara and San Benito Counties.
Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD)	Water and wastewater management district for a portion of the City of Hollister and the Ridgemark Development in San Benito County.
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)*	TNC is a leading international, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the diversity on life on Earth. Their mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. TNC is currently working on projects within the Pajaro River Watershed that promotes private lands conservation and other conservation practices. They work with landowners, communities, cooperatives and businesses to establish local groups that can protect land.
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	The USACE provides engineering and environmental services throughout the nation. The Corps has plans to implement a flood protection project on the lower Pajaro River.
Water Resources Association of San Benito County	The Water Resource Association is comprised of the SBCWD, San Benito County Government, Sunnyslope County Water District, City of Hollister, and City of San Juan Bautista.
Watsonville Wetlands Watch	The Watsonville Wetlands Watch is a nonprofit community-based organization dedicated to the protection, restoration and appreciation of the wetlands of the Pajaro Valley.
Wildlands Inc.	Wildlands, Inc. is a habitat development and land management company with projects throughout California and the western United States. Established in 1991, Wildlands is one of the Nation's first private organizations to establish mitigation banks and conservation banks that protect wildlife habitat in perpetuity.

\* A member of this organization participates in the Stakeholder Steering Committee, described in Section 14.2.

## 14.2 Partnerships

A number of other partnerships evolved over the course of the development of the IRWMP. The formation of the Collaborative is a prime example. The Collaborative itself was involved in a number of other partnerships at both the community and regional level.

A Stakeholder Steering Committee was assembled in February 2005 to facilitate Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP coordination and collaboration with the most interested parties. This committee provided a

forum for on-going discussion and stakeholder input, and provided review and stakeholder oversight throughout the initial IRWMP development process. Participating entities of the Stakeholder Steering Committee include representatives of each of the Partner agencies (PVWMA, SBCWD, and SCVWD) and members of other agencies and organizations as noted in Table 14-1.

On a community scale, Action Pajaro Valley (APV) was formed in September 1998 with an Advisory Board of over 50 community leaders representing over 20 stakeholder groups. The mission of APV is “to facilitate an on-going collaborative process for planning and creating a positive future for all residents of the Pajaro Valley”. APV has grown into an organized effort involving a partnership of people from many sectors of the Pajaro Valley. The Collaborative began working with APV in early 2005 as an avenue for greater community exposure and stakeholder involvement.

On a regional scale, the Collaborative has been working with the Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority (PRWFPA), an eight-agency Joint Powers Authority spanning the four counties and four water districts of the Pajaro River Watershed. Two of the partners, SCVWD and SBCWD, are members of the PRWFPA. This organization was established to provide flood protection and promote general watershed interests such as identifying and prioritizing strategies and projects that will provide multiple benefits with regard to water supply, groundwater recharge, and environmental restoration and protection benefits. The PRWFPA is another key working group that has assisted the IRWMP effort in developing water management strategies that meet multiple stakeholders’ goals and objectives.

Another partnership formed during IRWMP development was the integration of the RCDs. The Santa Cruz RCD and San Benito County RCD previously developed water management strategies for implementation within the Pajaro River Watershed with support mainly from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RCD has now joined the efforts of the Collaborative, APV, and the Stakeholder Steering Committee to implement those strategies on a broader scale as part of the integrated programs developed through the IRWMP process. It was important to the Collaborative and all stakeholders that RCDs’ needs were heard and their water management strategies considered.

Ultimately, it is envisioned that the Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP will coordinate with other regions throughout the Central Coast that are developing their own IRWMPs. In 2005, three agencies – Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, and PVWMA took the lead in developing and enacting a MOU for Integrated Regional Water Management in the Monterey Bay area. The goal of the Monterey Bay IRWMP is to more effectively manage resources and costs, and to better serve the public with regard to water resources management across the entire Monterey Bay region. More recently in February 2007, the six IRWMP planning regions in the Central Coast began discussions regarding regional cooperation within the framework of the IRWM process pursuant to Propositions 50 and 84.

### **14.3 Stakeholder Participation**

Stakeholder participation has been, and will continue to be, essential to the Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP process and stakeholders have participated in all phases of IRWMP development. Stakeholder participation has been influential in determining the path of the IRWMP, aiding in the decision making process from initial planning stages through strategy integration, and will aid in the Collaborative’s efforts to identify the most advantageous water management strategies to be implemented for years to come. In fact, initial decisions to pursue an immediate-term implementation phase were initiated by the readiness of stakeholder-led efforts/projects and joint efforts to collaborate on the development of water management programs.

### 14.3.1 IRWMP Events and Activities

A series of public IRWMP stakeholder meetings were held in 2006 and 2007 to allow interested parties a forum in which to share their ideas and concerns and to address the Partners. The meetings were organized along major IRWMP topics as shown in Table 14-2.

**Table 14-2: IRWMP Public Meetings**

Date	Meeting Topic	Agenda
8/02/06	IRWMP Mission, Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pajaro River Watershed Issues</li> <li>• IRWMP Process Overview</li> <li>• IRMWP Goals and Objectives</li> </ul>
9/21/06	Water Management Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Goals and Objectives</li> <li>• Water Management Strategies</li> <li>• Overview of Prioritization Process</li> </ul>
11/30/06	Integration and Prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Prioritization</li> <li>• Recommendation Process</li> </ul>
2/15/07	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended Programs</li> </ul>
3/14/07	Draft IRWMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Draft IRWMP</li> </ul>

The stakeholder meetings provided a forum to identify, discuss, and resolve regional conflicts associated with projects. These meetings also provided provide an opportunity to share information, discuss IRWMP progress, review key deliverables, collect comments and input, and gain consensus. Stakeholders were provided ample opportunities to shape the IRWMP, including a period of public review of the Draft IRWMP prior to adoption.

In addition to the dedicated IRWMP meetings, stakeholder involvement has been facilitated through a variety of events and activities, including workshops, board meetings and presentations, group meetings, and personal communications. Table 14-3 summarizes the major stakeholder coordination activities held during the development of the IRWMP.

**Table 14-3: Stakeholder Coordination Activities**

Stakeholder Coordination Activity	Agenda	Stakeholders Involved
Meeting with South County Regional Wastewater Authority TAC <i>October 2004</i>	Inform Stakeholders of IRWMP. Discuss projects.	SCVWD SCRWA City of Gilroy City of Morgan Hill
Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority <i>Various Dates (every other month)</i>	Inform Stakeholders of IRWMP. Discuss projects and development of Pajaro River Flood Protection program.	SCVWD SBCWD Santa Cruz County The Nature Conservancy Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA)
Water Resources Association of San Benito County Board Meeting <i>Various Dates (bimonthly)</i>	Inform Stakeholders of IRWMP. Discuss on projects.	SBCWD City of Hollister Sunnyslope County Water District City of San Juan Bautista General Public
San Benito County Water District Board Meetings	Inform Board and Public of IRWMP. Discuss projects and development of	SBCWD General Public

Stakeholder Coordination Activity	Agenda	Stakeholders Involved
<i>Various Dates (bimonthly)</i>	regional water management programs.	
Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency Board Meetings <i>Various Dates (bimonthly)</i>	Inform Board and Public of IRWMP. Discuss projects and development of regional water management programs.	PVWMA General Public
Santa Clara Valley Water District Board Meetings and Board Advisory Committee Meetings <i>Various Dates in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007</i>	Inform Board and Public of IRWMP. Discuss projects and development of regional water management programs.	SCVWD General Public
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Meetings <i>Various Dates (bimonthly)</i>	Inform Board and Public of IRWMP. Discuss projects and development of the Pajaro River Flood Protection Program.	Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Santa Cruz County Planning, Public Works & Environmental Health Services General Public
Pajaro River Watershed Council Meetings <i>Various Dates (quarterly)</i>	Inform Stakeholders of IRWMP. Discuss on projects.	San Benito County Farm Bureau SBCWD San Benito County SCVWD Watershed Institute CSUMB Santa Cruz County Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary City of Gilroy Monterey County Farm Bureau USDA, NRCS Sierra Club, CNPS TNC General Public
Action Pajaro Valley Stakeholder Workshop <i>Various Dates in 2005</i>	Inform Stakeholders of IRWMP process and Prop. 50 Chapter 8 Funding Processes. Discuss projects. Collect information and data on other potential projects. Discuss strategies for on-going collaboration for IRWMP process. Discuss Mission, Goals, and Objectives. Discuss Projects and Strategies. Discuss Stakeholder Process. Discuss Implementation Grant Proposal. Discuss project prioritization, project benefits, and matching funds.	PVWMA SCVWD SBCWD Action Pajaro Valley Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors – Districts 2 & 4 SCCFC&WCD City of Watsonville The Nature Conservancy Resource Conservation District Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) AMBAG

### 14.3.2 Stakeholder Communications and Outreach

Stakeholders were kept well informed of opportunities for involvement in IRWMP development. Phone and email contact lists were used to distribute information and notices of upcoming meetings. The IRWMP stakeholder meetings were advertised in five major newspapers with coverage spanning all the communities in the watershed.

Other stakeholder outreach efforts have included presentations and attendance at related conferences, workshops, board meetings, and other venues that include audiences with potential interest in Pajaro River Watershed activities such as regional agencies, organizations and community members. One example was a board presentation given in May 2006 at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Regional Water Forum held by AMBAG. Such presentations and attendance provided wide dissemination to the public about the efforts of the Collaborative to develop the IRWMP.

Numerous letters of support have been received by the Collaborative for the Pajaro River Watershed IRWMP effort. The letters of support are included in Appendix B. These letters demonstrate and confirm that stakeholders are on-board and have a willingness to participate, engage, and work diligently to develop an integrated management plan for the water resources of the Pajaro River Watershed.

The Collaborative also received several comment letters on the IRWMP. In addition to hosting a series of workshops through which stakeholder input was solicited, following the completion of the Draft IRWMP, the Collaborative provided a three week public review period during which stakeholders were invited to provide additional comments. Appendix C provides a record of the comments received and the responses.

Following the completion of the IRWMP report, ongoing stakeholder coordination and involvement will be necessary to support the vision and efforts outlined in the plan as well as implementation of the regional water management programs. Various stakeholder collaboration activities are anticipated to support this including: inclusion of stakeholders in the Implementation Teams for each regional water management program, periodic meetings with stakeholders to present planning and implementation updates and solicitation of new stakeholder projects as they emerge. Ultimately, stakeholders involved in the IRWMP effort will be responsible for the effective implementation of the regional water management programs.

## **14.4 Disadvantaged Community Involvement**

A “disadvantaged community” is defined by the State of California as a community with an annual median household income (MHI) that is less than 80% of the statewide MHI [CA Water Code, Section 79505.5(a)]. Census data from 2000 were collected and reviewed to identify any disadvantaged communities in the region. The 2000 State MHI was \$47,493; therefore, communities with an average MHI of \$37,994 are considered disadvantaged communities. Based on the 2000 census data, the City of Watsonville is a disadvantaged community. For a more detailed discussion of this determination, please refer to Section 2 – Regional Background, Disadvantaged Communities.

The City of Watsonville is a stakeholder in the IRWMP process and is actively involved in the planning and implementation of the integrated water management strategies. Since Watsonville’s economy is tightly linked to local agricultural activities, which are threatened by seawater intrusion, groundwater basin water supply imbalance and flooding, the development of a sustainable water supply and flood mitigation projects will aid in the sustainability of the local economy and well-being of the community in the future.

The City of Watsonville is actively participating as a stakeholder and implementation partner in the IRWMP process. Each of the three implementation programs discussed previously would provide disadvantaged community benefits, such as water supply reliability, water quality management, and flood protection, to the City of Watsonville and its economy. Additional discussion of the benefits to Disadvantaged Communities is included in Section 8 – Impacts and Benefits.

## 14.5 Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is addressed by assuring that all stakeholders have access to the decision-making process and that minority and/or low-income populations do not bear disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts. The impact of the IRWMP on disadvantaged and minority communities was examined and summarized below:

- The major environmental justice issue for the region is the impact to the disadvantaged community of Watsonville and the Town of Pajaro. As discussed in Section 14.4, the City of Watsonville was actively involved in the IRWMP development, which ensured that the needs and concerns of its residents were represented in the decision-making process. Representatives from the Town of Pajaro, though not actively involved in the IRWMP development, were invited to participate in the process. Furthermore, as identified in Section 8, near-term implementation of the IRWMP through the four regional water management programs offers benefits to both the City of Watsonville and Town of Pajaro.
- Additional environmental justice concerns were examined through PVWMA's Revised BMP in accordance with Executive Order 12898 and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation policy. The analysis conducted for the Revised BMP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) looked at effects on employment and water rates and construction impacts. The EIS analysis determined that without new water supply projects for the coast, agricultural production would be reduced, and jobs within the agricultural sector would be lost. The majority of these jobs are held by economically disadvantaged minorities. Implementation of the Conjunctive Water Supply Management and Water Supply/Salt Management programs will ensure that the water supplies needs of the Pajaro Valley are addressed, thereby promoting the continuation of high levels of agricultural productivity in the Pajaro Valley. Implementation of these programs would preserve jobs for low income minorities, a beneficial impact.
- An increase in water rates will likely accompany the implementation of projects in the Water Supply/Salt Management Program, but the increase is not expected to significantly affect minority or low-income populations. The City of Watsonville provides potable water service to the urbanized areas of the Pajaro Valley (the City and the unincorporated communities of Pajaro, Freedom and Corralitos). The City will reimburse PVWMA for a share of the project costs through a pass-through charge added to the water bills of the City's customers. Though the City's water rate will increase, it is still projected to be below the water rates charged throughout the rest of Santa Cruz County.
- Construction of project facilities will create short-term environmental impacts (noise, dust, traffic disruption) at neighboring land uses. An analysis of the areas affected by construction of project facilities determined that these construction nuisance impacts will not be borne predominantly by any minority population or low-income group.
- In addition to the environmental justice considerations in the Revised BMP EIS, the USACE will have to perform a similar analysis in the Levee Reconstruction Project EIS, which is currently being developed.

## 14.6 Consensus Building

The major obstacles that could hinder implementation of the IRWMP are opposition from the various stakeholders throughout the watershed and from permitting agencies that have authority within the region. To minimize these obstacles, the Collaborative has adopted a consensus building approach. All stakeholders – from local interest groups to regulatory agencies – have been invited to participate in the IRWMP planning process. Providing a forum to address stakeholder concerns during the development of the IRWMP will reduce the potential for conflicts during the implementation phase.

Consensus building will be integral to implementation of the Flood Protection Program because a local cost share is needed to pay for construction and on-going operations and maintenance of the Levee Reconstruction Project. Establishing local funding for flood protection projects requires a vote of property owners and local voters to institute a self-imposed tax and this will require achieving community consensus on a locally preferred plan. The Community Consensus, Benefit Assessment Vote and Local Governance subtask of the Levee Reconstruction Project focuses on gaining the public involvement and agreement critical obtaining voter approval for funding and ensuring that the Levee Reconstruction Project, which is a central component of the Flood Protection Program, can move forward.

Where project impacts are identified, mitigation measures will be necessary. The measures which could be required in order to obtain regulatory approval for projects may serve as obstacles to plan implementation. To minimize regulatory obstacles, the Collaborative will coordinate with local, state and federal regulatory agencies early in the process to determine necessary, corrective actions. Further discussion of agency coordination is provided in Section 15 - Coordination.