

# Napa County Integrated Water Resource Management Planning Framework

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Introduction & Need

The people, economy, ecosystems, and wildlife of Napa County depend on an adequate, reliable, clean water supply and intact, safe, and naturally-functioning watersheds. The County and its local jurisdictions are recognized leaders in protecting agricultural lands and providing for the conservation of water and natural resources for human, wildlife, and other beneficial uses. More than 134,000 residential and agricultural water-users in the County utilize diverse surface and groundwater resources. These water-users represent varied socio-economic backgrounds and demographics, community sizes and resource use levels. This diversity leads to a range of concerns about issues related to local and regional water management and watershed sustainability.

Napa County is divided into two major hydrologic regions – the San Francisco Bay Basin and the Sacramento River Basin. Major San Francisco Bay watersheds in Napa County include the Napa River draining into the San Pablo Bay and upper Suisun Creek watershed, draining into Suisun Bay; while the upper Putah Creek/Lake Berryessa watershed drains towards the Sacramento River Basin.

Because water issues cross multiple jurisdictions, local (i.e. countywide) water management efforts require integration to address issues at the multiple-watershed scales. Napa County has numerous individual water-related management plans, such as City and County General Plans, Urban Water Management Plans, Water Supply Master Plans, Wastewater Master Plans, Recycled Water Master Plans, Flood Protection Management Plans, Stormwater Management Plans, and Watershed Management Plans. These planning and policy documents would be strengthened by proactive project coordination, both within the County and with neighboring regional efforts such as the Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) being prepared within the San Francisco Bay Area (Bay Area IRWMP) and Westside Sacramento Valley (Westside IRWMP).

The purpose of integrating local and regional water and watershed management is to provide a cost effective process for identification and implementation of water management solutions that provide multiple benefits. The local and regional agencies recognize the need to collaborate utilizing a common water and watershed management framework. The planning approach outlined in the “**Napa County Integrated Water Resource Management Planning Framework (Napa IWRMPF)**” – is intended to provide a blueprint for developing an integrated planning and implementation initiative.

Combining local, state, and federal resources will allow development and implementation of high caliber projects that yield multiple benefits. Integration of local and regional water resource planning efforts will:

- prevent redundant planning and funding efforts;
- engage a wide stakeholder audience;
- further local agencies’ ability to manage operations and collective resources;
- increase regional water supply reliability and quality;
- facilitate collaborative solutions to resource scarcity and challenges;
- promote cost efficiencies;
- result in better service to the public;
- remove inconsistencies among planning and management efforts; and
- improve the competitiveness of projects within Napa County for funding.

## Governance & Decision-Making

The proposed planning framework proposes a governance structure to facilitate the development of and participation in inter- and intra-regional water resource management by achieving locally specific stakeholder-endorsed goals and objectives. A guiding principle behind the proposed planning structure was to utilize established boards and committees for governance and decision-making whenever feasible.

The proposed governing and decision-making structure for the Napa IWRMPF includes:

- *Governing Body* - The existing entity currently representing the Napa County IWRMPF is the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (FC&WCD) Board of Directors, which is composed of elected officials from the County of Napa and each City/Town within the County. For specific issues limited to the unincorporated area or outside the jurisdictional responsibilities of the FC&WCD (e.g., TMDL compliance and Measure A funding in unincorporated areas) the Napa County Board of Supervisors would serve as the governing body. These entities provide direction and oversight to the planning process and may serve as the primary fiduciary entity, as appropriate, for funding the planning process or local sponsoring entity for IWRMP grants.
- *Community Advisory Committee (CAC)*  
The CAC provides a forum for general community and interest group input into the countywide planning and implementation process with a representation from a diversity of stakeholder groups. The existing entity most closely represents a CAC for the planning framework is the Watershed Information Center & Conservancy (WICC) Board of Napa County.
- *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)* – *The TAC is advisory to the WICC and functions as an ad-hoc committee to provide a balanced representation and technical knowledge in water resources and the services that they provide, and includes local, state, federal public trust, and governmental agency and district staff, as well as academic, expert, and professional membership.*
- *Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)* - *The PAC is an advisory and staff support team to the Governing Body, TAC, and Community Advisory Committee. The PAC is an ad-hoc committee and includes staff members from the County of Napa, each of the cities and town, and water resource related special districts to provide policy and governance recommendations, as well as administrative and staffing support. The “Planning Team” assembled to assist in the development of this planning framework, with the addition of additional members from the jurisdictions described above is well positioned to serve as the PAC.*

Concerns about water resources issues vary; in large part depending on local geography, land use, and water supply availability. These differences will need to be considered and addressed in a constructive way for the planning framework to achieve its goals. The framework and its guiding principles support and encourage participants to strive to find common ground, pursue mutually beneficial programs, and plan for a future with ample, fully functioning natural resources, a robust economy, and environmental and social justice.

## Accountable & Adaptive

The county-wide planning framework is envisioned as an inclusive, equitable, transparent process guided by an adaptable, “living” planning framework. As such, the planning process will demonstrate a commitment to public involvement by:

- ensuring that policy and decision-making is open to the public;
- provide workshops and other opportunities to solicit stakeholder input;
- maintain a website about the planning framework, participation and incorporation of projects; and
- by publishing announcements, agendas, and minutes.

Given the variety of stakeholders in Napa County, it is anticipated that project priorities will vary according to changing perspectives and on-the-ground conditions and project readiness. Effective integration will therefore require adopting an adaptive management approach. The planning framework is intended to be a dynamic, evolving process guided by a flexible document and policy process that is evaluated regularly and improved upon overtime.

One of the greatest benefits of integrated water resource planning is the potential for sharing of water and watershed related data and information. The planning framework proposes to utilize a unified approach to sharing process and project information, primarily through an online database hosted by the WICC website ([www.napawatersheds.org](http://www.napawatersheds.org)). The WICC website focuses on information exchange and outreach and is playing an increasing role in storing watershed data and information related to natural resources, studies and research and stream restoration efforts.

## Goals & Objectives

Achieving the ambitious goals set forth in the framework will be challenging but feasible if those goals are integrated with water and watershed management efforts already underway in the County and within the region. The proposed framework includes the following shared goals distilled from over twenty-five water and watershed-related planning documents:

1. To ensure healthy watersheds and communities in Napa County.
2. To support both economic vitality and ecosystem viability in Napa County.
3. To provide an efficient and equitable means to identify, plan, fund, and implement projects.
4. To facilitate inter- and intra-regional cooperation.
5. To foster coordination, collaboration, and communication among participating agencies to achieve efficiencies, enhance services, and build support for vital plans and projects.

The planning framework objectives were developed using the same planning documents that served to produce the above-listed goals. The objectives can be sorted into the five general categories below and provide direction for actions in support of project identification and implementation:

- Reliable Water Supply
- Watershed Management and Habitat Restoration
- Flood Protection and Stormwater Management
- Quality of Life
- Stakeholder Outreach

## Integration with Existing IRWM Plans

Napa County is geographically divided between two State IRWMP funding areas: the San Francisco Bay Area Funding Area, and the Sacramento River Funding Area. These adjacent areas have developed, or are developing separate Integrated Water Resource Management Plans (IRWMPs).

The intent of the planning framework is not to develop and compete with existing IRWMP efforts, but to develop a process by which agencies and individuals can effectively contribute to regional IRWMPs to achieve funding needs and foster locally integrated water resource planning. As such, projects identified in the Napa River and Suisun Creek watersheds will participate in the San Francisco Bay Area IRWMP, and projects from the Putah Creek/Lake Berryessa drainage basins will be integrated into the Westside Sacramento River IRWMP.

By participating in both the Bay Area and Westside IRWMPs, Napa County and its municipalities will help regional and local management entities avoid redundant water/watershed planning and implementation efforts. Meaningful integration will require sustained coordination and cooperation in the following areas:

- Water Resource and Local Land Use Planning
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Project Identification, Review and Evaluation
- Plan preparation, Integration and Implementation

