

## **6.0 Implementation Strategy**

### **6.1 Purpose**

Implementing programs and projects that will enhance the management of water and related resources will be a function of the effectiveness of the leadership and level of commitment that is made to the IRWMP. The integrated actions presented in Section 5.0 and detailed in Section 7.0, represent diverse actions, involving many entities and many stakeholders. This breadth of involvement is based on the recognition that the region of Yolo County is made up of very different subregions or subwatersheds from the standpoint of the resources, resource issues and opportunities, jurisdictional and coordinating or implementing entities, and intra-regional associations.

This section aims to build on the momentum created during IRWMP formulation and to set forth a strategy to enhance the long-term management of water and related resources for the benefit of the community of Yolo County. Although this IRWMP purposely was prepared with a long-term perspective, the TC was mindful that many of the individual and integrated actions contained in the IRWMP are in the preliminary planning and pre-feasibility stages and are not fully developed for implementation. Accordingly, the implementation strategy for the IRWMP includes a framework for advancing the management of water resources and related activities through the next three to five years. Success during this period is critical to integrated resource management in Yolo County. The collective knowledge of the implementing entities, participating stakeholders, and the public regarding the resources and management opportunities and constraints will be enhanced by implementing actions described in the IRWMP. The degree of success will be influenced by the effectiveness of the design and implementation of work plans to strengthen the understanding of the resource issues, constraints, and opportunities; and the monitoring and adaptive decisions to advance resources management. Additionally, the success of the collaborative relationships that are formed and that mature during the first three to five years will strengthen the overall institutional structure that is critical for the long-term success of the IRWMP. Evidence of this maturation emerged during the preparation of this IRWMP.

Water resource planning and management is never completed. It is enhanced incrementally over time through adaptive design of resource programs and projects based on new data and information, additional analyses, collaborative partners, and public policy. It will be important for the WRA to regularly update the IRWMP and to adapt future efforts based on the progress and understanding acquired during the upcoming three- to five-year period.

The framework for implementing the IRWMP is addressed in the following components:

- Institutional Structure
- Action Program (Presented in Section 7.0)

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- Funding Opportunities
- Environmental and Regulatory Compliance
- Public Outreach
- Items for Early Action

**6.2 Institutional Structure**

**6.2.1 Background**

The importance and need for coordinating the planning, implementation, and management of water and resource related activities was recognized in the first Yolo County Water Plan in 1984, which established an Interagency Water Management Coordinating Group (ICOR). ICOR was composed of senior level staff from the cities of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland; the Dunnigan Water District; the Yolo-Zamora Water District; the Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District; Yolo County; and the University of California, Davis. ICOR met regularly to discuss water-related programs of the respective agencies and to share resource information and operational problems and successes. In fall 1989, ICOR members, realizing that specific elements of the water plan had not yet been implemented, suggested that the water plan be updated to refocus attention in the interest of advancing water management in the county. The suggestion was accepted and the participating agencies collectively funded the 1992 Yolo County Water Plan Update.

The 1992 update established WRA as a vehicle for coordinating implementation of the plan recommendations. The WRA’s overall success in fulfilling its intended goals and objectives has been variable. It is worth noting, however, that since 1993 the WRA designed and implemented essential foundational actions. Also, a great deal of significant work has been completed by member agencies with special funding and technical assistance from DWR.

Initial IRWMP efforts focused on completing the Background Data and Information (**Appendix A**) to document known resource data and information. The WRA’s 2004 decision to establish a TC was intended to improve its effectiveness in fulfilling organizational goals and objectives. This is proving to have been a well-founded decision. The effectiveness of this nominal restructuring of the WRA to focus on the TC’s work is exemplified in the WRA’s success in receiving grant funding for this IRWMP, as well as the actual preparation of this IRWMP. The TC has also effectively implemented foundational actions described in the IRWMP. The cooperative relationship and guidance of DWR staff has been a significant contributor to the success of the TC and the progress WRA has made on its IRWMP effort.

In developing the IRWMP, and particularly in developing the wide and extended array of foundational, integrated and non-integrated or stand-alone actions, it has become abundantly clear that Yolo County is very complex in terms of geography, resources, stakeholders, and

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jurisdictional responsibilities. Formulating the integrated actions and reviewing the entities and stakeholders involved has shown that no one group or organization can effectively coordinate, implement, and manage the breadth of the work required to implement the IRWMP’s integrated projects. It is clearly a team approach. For a team approach to be effective, it must be understood that Yolo County is the primary focus and that the implementation of projects and programs is the important factor and not who implemented them. Each project is different and will require different levels of assistance and support to maximize its potential and accomplishments. There is no “cookie cutter” or “template” for water and resources management, and there is no substitute for genuine communication and collaboration with the interest of the communities being the central theme.

In summary, harnessing the expertise unique to the respective subwatersheds of Yolo County, in an open and collaborative process, will provide the best model for implementing the IRWMP.

**6.2.2 Functional Needs**

As noted above, the respective integrated projects presented in this IRWMP are quite different and the success in implementing each or portions of each over time will substantially enhance the community of Yolo County. The functional ingredients noted below are essential to the success of each integrated project:

- An effective team leader or lead partners.
- A qualified cooperative management team, advisory committee, or established organization that can focus on IRWMP implementation.
- An effective stakeholder process.
- An effective public outreach program.
- Public/community support.
- Willingness of entities to be an implementation partner as part of the IRWMP process.
- Funding.

**6.2.3 Proposed Institutional Structure**

The functional ingredients essential to the success of the respective integrated projects cannot be embodied within a single entity at the scale that is needed for this IRWMP. This observation will become even more apparent when reviewing the Action Program (Section 7.0).

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It is critical to have an institutional structure that facilitates and supports the implementation of the foundational and integrated actions of the IRWMP. This structure should capitalize on the progress made recently through the WRA TC. Accordingly, the structure should accomplish the following:

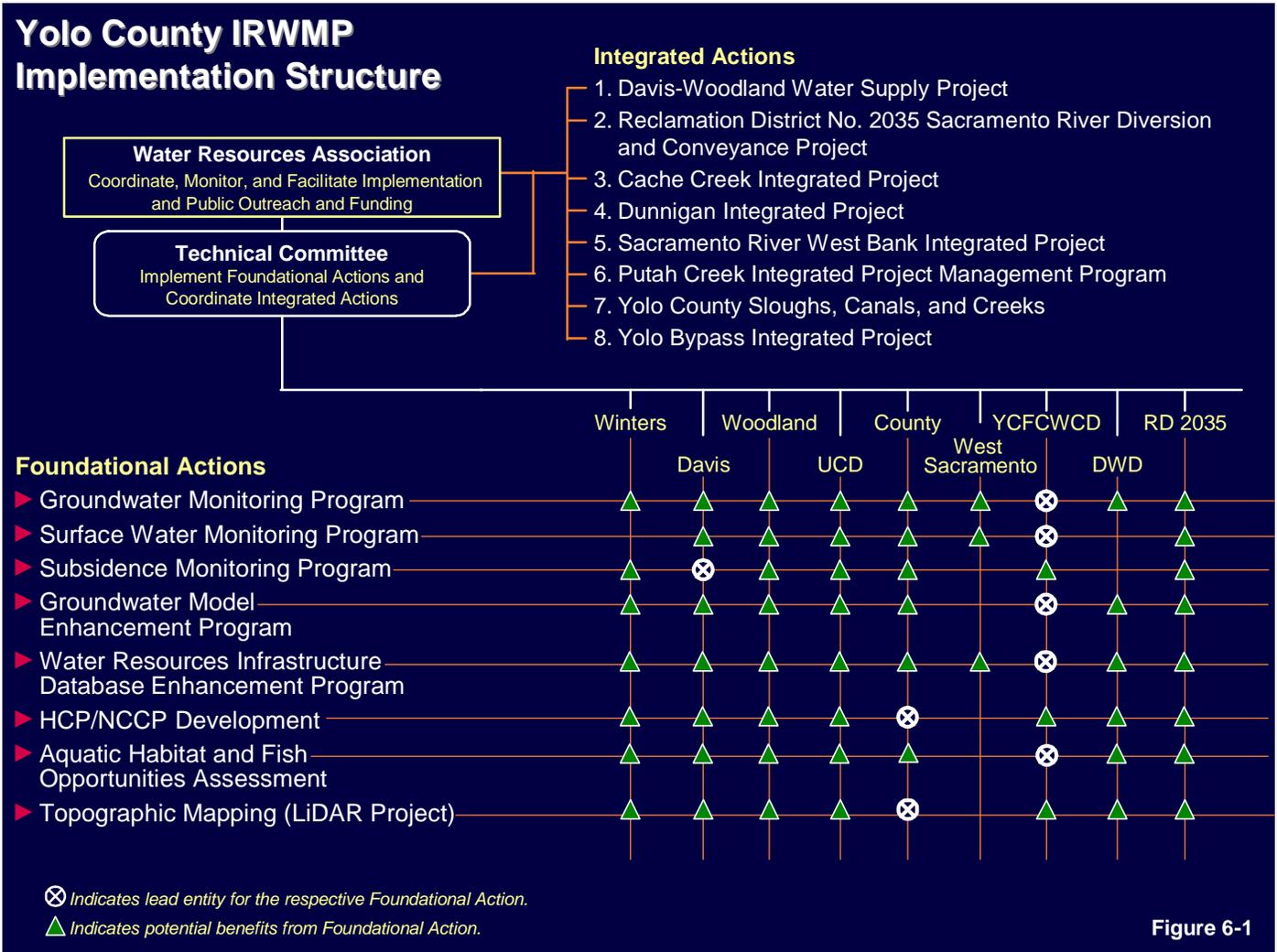
- Facilitate and support entities in implementing both Foundational and Integrated Actions.
- Ensure that data and information from monitoring and investigative programs continue to be available and disseminated to the public.
- Help to obtain funding to implement both Foundational and Integrated Actions.
- Contract with funding agencies on behalf of implementing entities.
- Monitor progress of those entities in implementing both foundational and integrated actions and encourage/assist, when appropriate, those entities where progress is limited.
- Provide a forum for regional coordination with effective public involvement and outreach.

Based upon the recent performance and accomplishments of WRA and its TC, a review of the original intent of the WRA, and an understanding of what is important to the success of the IRWMP at this time, it appears that WRA can and should provide the institutional structure to support the broad advancement of the management of water and related resources in Yolo County. It must be highlighted here that structure facilitates success, but success can only happen with effective leadership and collaboration. Integrated resources management is critical and the extent to which it can be accomplished will be a function of the ability of those responsible and involved in the process to work together to accomplish the integration in a manner that is most beneficial for the resources and the communities involved. Integration is not the product of this IRWMP, since integration actually occurs in the implementation. However, this IRWMP does provide the overall guidance and framework by which integration can be initiated and sustained as a common aspect of implementation.

The principal elements of the institutional structure envisioned for implementing the IRWMP are presented in **Figure 6-1**. They are described briefly below, from the standpoint of the respective roles and/or relationships as they relate to implementing the IRWMP.

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**FIGURE 6-1**



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**6.2.4 WRA Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors for the WRA is composed of supervisors, council members, and representatives from member agencies. Board functions would include:

- Oversee the activities of the TC.
- Continue to render decisions on the budget and dues structure to support WRA activities.
- Continue to render decisions on allocating funds contributed by member agencies to plan and implement foundational actions.
- Support member agencies and collaborating entities in seeking funding to perform work aimed at implementing the actions contained in the IRWMP.
- Support efforts of the Yolo Bypass Working Group to establish a structure for implementing actions in the Bypass.
- Serve as the fiscal agent for member agencies and collaborating partners to secure monies received from outside funding programs administered by government agencies or foundations as a means of maximizing outside funding for IRWMP implementation.
- Provide a public forum for regular reporting by member agencies and collaborating partners involved in implementing the IRWMP.
- Provide a public forum for neighboring regions to report on water and resource activities being conducted in their respective regions.
- Host an annual conference or workshop to inform the public of the work and accomplishments in implementing foundational and integrated actions contained in the IRWMP.
- Take a leadership role for the timely update of IRWMP document on behalf of its members.

**6.2.5 WRA Technical Committee**

The TC is composed of management and senior staff of WRA member agencies. Member agencies will be partners in implementing several of the Integrated Actions presented in this IRWMP (except for the Putah Creek and Yolo Bypass Integrated Projects where non-member entities appear to be best suited to manage implementation because of their backgrounds and experience working within the respective sub-regions). Clear communications among the TC

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and representatives from the Putah Creek Integrated Project and Yolo Bypass Integrated Project will be the key to effectively coordinate countywide water- and resource-related activities.

The functions of the TC would include:

- Continue to coordinate and take a leadership role in implementing foundational actions.
- Coordinate and keep TC members informed of work being performed by the respective agencies relating to implementing the IRWMP.
- Coordinate with participants of the Lower Putah Creek and Yolo Bypass Integrated Projects.
- Seek opportunities to integrate activities between geographic subareas when the overall results will be more beneficial for the community and resources.
- Remain informed of and pursue potential funding opportunities to assist implementing partners.
- Continue to formulate recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding project funds, budget, and programs and implementation strategy.
- Make regular reports to the Board of Directors on the progress and accomplishments achieved in relation to implementing foundational actions.
- Formulate recommendations to the Board of Directors on means and methods to enhance public outreach efforts related to implementing the IRWMP.
- Formulate IRWMP funding recommendations for Board of Directors consideration.

### 6.2.6 Foundational Actions

Foundational actions are programs or activities usually implemented by member agencies with funding from the WRA project funds budget. The funding may be from financial contributions of member agencies and a variety of other funding programs. The Board of Directors decides whether to fund and implement foundational actions, based on information and recommendations received from the TC.

### 6.2.7 Integrated Actions

Integrated actions are individual or component actions implemented with the collaborative participation of various entities working together in subregions and subwatersheds within the County. Unlike foundational actions, the Board of Directors exercises no control over the

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funding or implementation of the integrated actions. Rather, the management structure established for that integrated action has responsibility for decisions about funding, scheduling, and prioritization of activities.

To increase funding opportunities for implementing integrated actions, it is essential that the lead partner and managing entities keep the WRA Board of Directors informed about the work, successes, problems, funding needs, and funding opportunities. It is clear that most funding programs—those in effect today and those available in the future—will require projects or activities that involve and empower those with sub-region expertise and commitment to be a part of the regional IRWMP implementation. Accordingly, the WRA Board of Directors can be most effective in supporting requests or applications for funding if it is kept informed of the status and progress of the integrated actions. The Board would be able to support requests for funding to the extent that it is informed and is in agreement with the proposed work.

**6.3 Funding Opportunities**

A variety of funding sources are available for both foundational and integrated actions, or for components of integrated actions contained in the IRWMP. There are also sources proposed for voter approval, and other sources are likely to emerge in the future. An important responsibility of the TC will be to stay informed of the funding opportunities and to ensure through the collaborative process that the lead partners for the respective integrated actions are informed (see Section 6.2 “Institutional Structure”). In most cases, implementation of an integrated action will require funding from more than one source due to a combination of factors. These could include funding restrictions (in terms of amount and purpose), strong competition for limited funds, and financing challenges where matching funds are required. This section summarizes known potential funding sources.

**6.3.1 State Bond Funds: Loans and Grants**

Over the past several decades a number of statewide bond measures were approved by California voters that have provided billions of dollars for water supply, wastewater treatment, flood control, water quality improvement, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, and other programs. In recent years, this has included Propositions 204, 12, 13, 40, and 50. Although funds from most past bonds have been fully allocated, some programs are still active under Propositions 40 and 50.

One of the most important programs established by Proposition 50 is a grant program for developing and implementing integrated water resource management plans and actions. Funding was allocated for both the development and implementation of IRWMPs and their recommended actions. There was tremendous competition for the first round of implementation grants, and intense competition is expected to continue for the second and final round of grants in 2007. Monies will also be allocated for planning grants in a second round, and components of the foundational and integrated actions could be eligible. The funding available under Proposition 50 is expected to be fully allocated by 2008.

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The passage of Proposition 1E, Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006, authorizes \$4.09 billion and Proposition 84, Water Quality, Safety and Supply, Flood Control, Natural Resources Protection, Park Improvements, Bonds Initiative Statute authorizes \$5.388 billion in bonds. These respective bond measures provide significant funding opportunities for several flood hazard reduction and water resources-related projects identified in this IRWMP. A breakdown of funding under the two propositions is presented in **Table 6-1** and **Table 6-2**.

The \$800 million allocated for flood control in Proposition 84 is proposed to be allocated as presented in **Table 6-3**.

Of the \$1.525 billion is allocated for safe drinking water, etc., \$1 billion is earmarked for grants that assist local public agencies to meet the long-term water needs of the state. Of this amount, \$73 million is allocated to the Sacramento region. Eligible projects must implement integrated regional water management plans.

<b>Table 6-1 – Proposition 1E Funding Programs</b>	
<b>Funding Category</b>	<b>Amount, \$1,000,000</b>
State-Federal Project Levees, Weirs, Bypasses, and Other Flood Management Facilities, including in the Delta	3,000
Reducing the Risk of Levee Failures in the Delta	
Statewide Flood Management Facilities	
Flood Control Subventions	500
Flood Corridors, Bypasses, and Mapping	290
Storm Water Flood Management Grants	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,090</b>

Source: Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006.

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<b>Table 6-2 – Proposition 84 Funding Programs</b>	
<b>Funding Category</b>	<b>Amount, \$1,000,000</b>
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality, and Other Water Projects	1,525
Flood Control Projects	800
Statewide Water Management	65
Protection of Rivers, Lakes, and Streams	928
Forest and Wildlife Conservation	450
Protection of Beaches, Bays, and Coastal Waters and Watersheds	540
State Parks and Nature Education Facilities	500
Sustainable Communities and Climate Change Projects	580
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,388</b>

Source: The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006.

<b>Table 6-3 – Proposition 84 Flood Control Funding</b>	
<b>Funding Category</b>	<b>Amount, \$1,000,000</b>
Reducing Risk of Levee Failures in the Delta	275
Statewide Flood Management Facilities	275
Flood Control Subventions	180
Flood Corridors, Bypasses, and Mapping	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>

Source: Urban Levee Evaluation Program, Local Levee Officials Workshop, California Department of Water Resources, February 27-March 1, 2007.

### 6.3.2 State Revolving Funds

State Revolving Funds (SRFs) are pools of capital dedicated to financing public infrastructure. SRFs are funded through federal and state contributions. Two SRF programs have been authorized by Congress. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) is a loan program to fund water quality protection projects for wastewater treatment, non-point source pollution control, and watershed and estuary management. In California the program is administered by the SWRCB, with \$200-300 million available each year (<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/funding/srf.html>). Bond rates are typically below market rates.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) makes funds available to drinking water systems to finance infrastructure improvements. The DWSRF also emphasizes providing funds to small and disadvantaged communities and to programs encouraging pollution prevention as a tool for ensuring safe drinking water. In California, the program is called the California Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program, and is administered by the California Department of Health Services. The DHS web site (<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/SRF/srfindex.htm>) has details on program implementation, current funding availability and program status.

### 6.3.3 Local Financing

Many projects contained in the IRWMP will require local financing and/or funding. Depending upon the actions involved, this could either be an allocation of funds on an annual basis from current revenues or, more likely, the sale of revenue bonds with repayment linked to user fees (for example, increases in water or wastewater charges). There are a variety of limitations on local financing, and these may vary by individual entity. Much will depend on the financial bonding capacity of each project sponsor. Additional consideration are provisions of Proposition 218, the ballot measure approved by California voters in November 1996. Proposition 218 added additional restrictions beyond those approved by California voters in 1978's Proposition 13, on imposition of "assessments and fees". In general, Proposition 218 (article XIII D, Section 6 of the California Constitution) requires voter approval for all taxes and for certain "property-related" fees. Interpretation of such restrictions is ongoing, and is subject to a variety of legal decisions and interpretations. A recent California Supreme Court decision (*Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency v. Virgil*, July 24, 2006) concluded that a public agency's water rates and charges for ongoing water delivery are property-related fees and charges subject to provisions of Proposition 218.

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### **6.3.4 Federal Emergency Management Agency**

A community is eligible for FEMA grant funding when it has an adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan or Flood Mitigation Plan. Yolo County and cooperating cities have an adopted Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan, but the plan lacks specific flood hazard mitigation projects. The plan may be updated at any time to incorporate projects that have been identified or may be identified as a result of work performed in implementing the integrated actions. Potential grant funding could be available from FEMA programs that are described briefly below.

#### **Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program**

Authorized through enactment of the Disaster Management Act by Congress in October 2000, this program can provide funding to states, public agencies, communities, and tribes for cost-effective hazard mitigation planning activities that complement a comprehensive mitigation program and reduce injuries, loss of life, and property.

#### **Flood Mitigation Assistance**

Provides funding to assist states and communities in implementing measures to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other insurable structures. The three types of grants available through the FMA Program are planning, project, and technical assistance grants. Only communities that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program can apply for project and technical assistance grants. Planning grants are available to states and communities that prepare flood mitigation plans.

#### **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program**

Provides grants to local, state, and tribal governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration (up to 15% of the FEMA disaster funds they receive is for hazard mitigation planning and projects).

#### **Urban Streams Restoration Program**

Supports activities that minimize property damage caused by flooding and bank erosion, restores the natural value of streams, and promotes community stewardship. This program funds projects that have flood management or erosion control as a primary objective, and maintains or improves the environmental characteristics of a stream or restores a stream to function naturally.

**6.3.5 United States Department of Agriculture/Natural Resource Conservation Service**

The United States Department of Agriculture has a number of water, wastewater, storm drainage and solid waste loan and grant programs available for small rural communities (<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/programs.htm>). These funds have been used in the past for small projects in Yolo County and will continue to be an important source of funds for such projects. Additionally, numerous programs are administered through the Natural Resource Conservation District aimed at reducing soil erosion, enhancing water supplies, improving water quality, increasing wildlife habitat, and reducing damage caused by floods and other natural disasters (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/>)

**NRCS EWP**

Assists sponsors and individuals in implementing emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property created by a natural disaster. Activities include providing financial and technical assistance to remove debris from streams, protecting destabilized stream banks, establishing cover on critically eroding lands, implementing conservation practices, and purchasing floodplain easements. The program is designed for recovery measures, and it is not necessary for a national emergency to be declared for an area to be eligible for assistance.

**6.3.6 Community Development Block Grant Program**

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG provides annual grants on a formula basis to numerous local governments and States (<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communiitydevelopment/programs/>). Yolo County has successfully utilized CDBG grant funds to assist disadvantage communities in the county.

**6.3.7 “Pay-As-You-Go”**

Although not an option for capital-intensive projects, “pay-as-you-go” is possible for some of the foundational actions such as groundwater and surface water monitoring programs. Current county-wide subsidence monitoring, groundwater level and water quality monitoring is conducted and funded largely at the local level, with significant efforts by the YCFCWCD and coordination among members of the WRA. Additional help is provided by the State Department of Water Resources. A “pay-as-you-go” approach means funds from local government budgets are allocated on an annual basis for specified on-going actions.

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### 6.3.8 Other

There are a variety of smaller programs that offer financial assistance in the form of grants or loans. These programs typically are for very specific purposes, and are limited by available funding. The Water Recycling Funding Program (<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/recycling/index.html>), a component of Proposition 50, established \$42 million in construction grant funding for recycled water projects. Earlier loan and grant programs were targeted at subjects such as agricultural drainage, pesticide reduction, non-point source pollution control, and clean beaches. Such programs can be created either through annual legislation or statewide initiatives, such as bond programs. Although the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is in the process of reviewing its long-term mission including funding options, there are likely to be funds administered directly or indirectly by CALFED that may be available. A key to such potential funding is a connection between the specific IRWMP project and CALFED goals. Finally, there is a great deal of legislative focus on additional funding for flood control, including a \$4 billion flood bond for the statewide November 2006 ballot. It is likely that a combination of future State bond funds and additional federal funding may be available for the flood control elements of the IRWMP.

There are also separate funding sources for recreation enhancement and habitat improvement programs, administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). These programs are described on DPR's web site (<http://www.parks.ca.gov/>) and include the Habitat Conservation Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Recreational Trails Program, and various smaller funds that may change from year to year based on legislative actions and budget appropriations (including the State's Environmental License Plate Fund program).

It has been well demonstrated in Yolo County that the effort and participation of volunteers are very effective. This is an invaluable resource and one that will continue to be important from the standpoint of both work accomplished and community outreach.

### 6.4 *Environmental and Regulatory Compliance*

Programs and projects proposed in the IRWMP will need to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including environmental laws, regulations and ordinances. A complete review of all applicable laws and regulations is beyond the scope of this plan. This section highlights the major environmental laws and regulations, and discusses recent developments that may affect environmental compliance strategy.

#### 6.4.1 **Applicable Laws and Regulations**

Major laws and regulations at the federal level include:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). May apply if a federal partner take part in the implementation of a project (e.g., the US Army Corps of Engineers may partner on levee improvement projects along the Sacramento River).

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- Clean Water Act, in particular Section 401 and Section 404. For impacts of dredge and fill materials on Waters of the United States, and wetland impacts.
- Rivers and Harbors Act, in particular Section 10. For wetland impacts.
- Endangered Species Act.
- Clean Air Act.
- National Historic Preservation Act, in particular Section 106.

Major state laws and regulations that could apply to IRWMP programs and projects include:

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- California Environmental Species Act (CESA).
- California Fish and Game Code Section 1601 (Streambed Alteration Agreements).
- Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

In addition, permits may need to be obtained for encroachment into floodways regulated by the Reclamation Board of California (federal flood control levees or within the 10-foot surrounding Reclamation Board easement, impacting flood control function of such levees, or within state designated floodway [Title 23 California Code of Regulations]); or from the State Lands Commission for encroachment onto submerged lands and swamp and overflowed lands owned by the state. Mitigation may be required as a condition for issuance of such permits.

In addition to federal and state laws and regulations, Yolo County and city ordinances may affect the implementation of IRWMP programs and projects. Such ordinances include zoning and development ordinances, tree preservation ordinances, storm water management ordinances and others.

There are several laws, mechanisms and programs that allow the streamlining of environmental compliance procedures. Streamlining usually reduces cost, saves time and may result in better environmental protections. Some of the procedures that may apply to the IRWMP are discussed in the following to sections.

### 6.4.2 Streamlining Environmental Compliance

Under CEQA and NEPA it is possible to prepare tiered compliance documents, such as program EIRs (or programmatic EISs) for agency programs that have smaller projects within them. For example, it may be appropriate to prepare a program EIR for an integrated project or program described in his IRWMP once planning and design are advanced and there is funding

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and intent to proceed. The advantages listed in the CEQA Guidelines (Sec. 15168[b]) of such a program EIR may then apply, including: (1) a more exhaustive consideration of impacts; (2) better attention to cumulative impacts; (3) avoidance of reconsideration of recurring policy issues; (4) consideration of more flexible programmatic mitigation measures; and (5) reduction of paperwork by the reuse of data.

Multi-objective projects, like those including water supply and aquatic and riparian ecosystem enhancement, may in themselves have reduced environmental impacts because they may have a large net environmental benefit (even though components of the projects may have environmental impacts). Such multi-objective projects may require less mitigation than single purpose projects.

Agencies may recognize the overall environmental benefits of a particular program, which may allow them to issue programmatic permits. Such a permitting agreement can substantially reduce regulatory red tape, and facilitate and accelerate the implementation of the beneficial program. A good example is the riparian restoration program for Putah Creek implemented by the LPCCC. Habitat restoration or watershed improvement actions conducted by, or in coordination with, the LPCCC that meet certain requirements are covered under DFG and US Army Corps of Engineers permits held by SCWA, and are subject to a categorical CEQA exemption (EDAW 2005, Appendices H and I). The permits include a programmatic Streambed alteration Agreement from DFG for work affecting the “bed and bank” of lower Putah Creek and its tributaries, a Nationwide Permit 27 (Restoration) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Clean Water Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The requirements that projects need to meet typically include various environmental protections, such as avoidance of breeding seasons or salmonid spawning seasons, and BMPs, among others. Obtaining these types of programmatic permits may also be possible for other habitat restoration programs.

The Yolo County Resource Conservation District (RCD) conducted a watershed permit coordination program that was funded by a State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant from 1998 to 2001. This conservation facilitation project focused on coordinating regulatory agency representatives to limit bureaucratic obstacles to voluntary, landowner-led conservation efforts in the region. The RCD collaborated with SWRCB and non-profit partners to assess local opportunities for streamlining the permit process for landowners wanting to improve the quality of their property for hosting wildlife habitat. RCD staff continue to pursue that goal despite the conclusion of the grant.

Multi-species HCP/NCCP programs are an example of regulatory streamlining and regional habitat conservation with potentially far reaching compliance consequences. The Yolo County HCP/NCCP described below is an example of such a program that is currently under development.

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### 6.4.3 Yolo County HCP/NCCP

The Yolo County HCP/NCCP is a cooperative planning effort under California's Natural Community Conservation Planning Program Act and the federal Endangered Species Act to protect habitats and species. The Yolo HCP/NCCP will address the need for broad-based planning to provide for the protection and conservation of the region's biodiversity, while allowing for appropriate development and growth to occur. The HCP/NCCP "Planning Area" includes the entirety of Yolo County and all incorporated areas. To better manage the habitat conservation planning process, Yolo County and the cities of West Sacramento, Davis, Winters and Woodland have formed the Yolo County Habitat/Natural Communities Conservation Plan Joint Powers Agency (JPA) in 2002. This agency is responsible for coordinating the HCP/NCCP effort and reports to each of the participating jurisdictions. Adoption of the HCP/NCCP is expected by December 2008.

The HCP/NCCP will permanently protect habitat, establish preserve designs, and establish management guidelines for the conservation and recovery of at least 28 species (including endangered, threatened, candidate, or other species known, or reasonably expected to be found in Yolo County). This initial list of species will continue to evolve as the planning process continues. The JPA recognizes the importance of addressing unlisted species to provide for their conservation and management to ensure common species do not become listed as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act and/or the California Endangered Species Act; in addition to avoiding the need to develop new and different measures or restrictions to mitigate for impacts, should those species become listed in the future.

The natural communities upon which these species depend include riparian, woodland, wetland, grassland and agricultural habitats. These habitats have the potential to provide fully functional ecosystems for the species proposed for coverage in the HCP/NCCP, but are unlikely to withstand local growth pressures unless a comprehensive landscape-level program to preserve, protect, and manage the natural communities and the species they support is developed and implemented. Consequently, the JPA is committed to preparing and implementing a HCP/NCCP that will anticipate future development and other land uses that are likely to occur in the County, and provide a framework to ensure that these activities appropriately avoid, minimize, and mitigate for project impacts to these species and their habitats.

The Yolo HCP/NCCP planning goals include the following objectives:

- Provides for the preservation, conservation, and recovery needs of Yolo County's species and habitats within the planning framework.
- Allows appropriate and compatible economic growth and development consistent with applicable local land use laws and associated General Plans.

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- Provides a basis for permits and authorizations necessary to lawfully take the HCP/NCCP Covered Species listed as threatened or endangered pursuant to the terms of the federal Endangered Species Act and/or the California Endangered Species Act.
- Provides a process for issuance of take authorizations for the HCP/NCCP Covered Species not currently listed, which may be listed in the future without the imposition of additional mitigation requirements outside of the HCP/NCCP process.
- Provides a comprehensive means to coordinate and standardize mitigation and compensation requirements of the Endangered Species Act, CEQA, NEPA, the California Natural Community Conservation Planning Act and other applicable laws and regulations relating to biological and natural resources within the HCP/NCCP Planning Area; allowing public and private actions to be governed equally and consistently, thereby reducing delays, expenses and regulatory duplication.
- Provides a less costly, more efficient project review process which results in greater conservation values than the current project-by-project, species-by-species review and regulatory regime.
- Serves as a platform for the coordination of and cooperation among the various and on-going conservation planning efforts, occurring both within the county and in neighboring jurisdictions.
- Provides clear expectations and regulatory predictability for the land users and other conservation efforts within the Planning Area.
- Includes measures sufficient to enable the US Fish and Wildlife Service to issue incidental take permits in the event covered unlisted species are listed and subject to the “take” prohibition.

The Yolo HCP/NCCP will result in the following:

- Completion of a comprehensive countywide plan for the long-term conservation of multiple species.
- Establish a process to address future impacts of development on the county before remaining habitat is lost or degraded.
- Identify and develop conservation strategies and preserve designs for the county’s natural communities, including riparian, grassland, wetland and woodland habitats, essential to the range of plant and animal species covered by the plan.

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- Maintain effective cooperation and communication between stakeholders, local government, DFG and US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Cooperatively develop mechanisms that forge partnerships among the participating local governments, and that utilize existing land use processes and procedures.

### **6.5 Public Outreach**

Public outreach and other forms of stakeholder involvement are important components of the IRWMP implementation process. Public outreach is part of the overall implementation strategy for integrated projects and may also be part of the implementation of individual components of the integrated projects. The public outreach and stakeholder involvement process that were initiated as part of the development of the IRWMP form the basis of public outreach efforts and stakeholder involvement during further planning and implementation of the integrated projects.

The WRA has already initiated a stakeholder involvement process for Cache Creek flooding issues. Stakeholders have been interviewed and a report has been prepared about the results of that effort. That process has been especially productive in informing the WRA and member agencies about the concerns in the community about flood risk, flood insurance and the 100-year floodplain mapping conducted by FEMA. Stakeholders also indicated that an open community process is desired to move forward in addressing this issue.

The WRA and implementing agencies will need to coordinate their public outreach efforts with ongoing stakeholder involvement efforts, or efforts that will be initiated within the coming years. For example, the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area has conducted a public involvement process as part of preparing its Land Management Plan. Stakeholders are also involved in the Yolo Bypass Working Group, which has been an important forum for stakeholder input. Another example is the public involvement process conducted by LPCCC that is underway as part of development and implementation of watershed improvements along Putah Creek. A major future public outreach effort will be part of the planning and implementation of the Yolo County HCP/NCCP as is required under the NCCP Act.

Specific efforts need to be made to reach disadvantaged communities through public outreach efforts. These efforts may include the need for translation services to ensure that non-English speakers are reached. Disadvantaged communities in the county have specific issues requiring attention in public meetings and workshops in these communities, including the aging of infrastructure in communities such as Yolo, Madison and Esparto. For those integrated projects that cover these towns specific outreach activities need to be included that highlight the needs for infrastructure improvements and that receive community input on aging infrastructure and other local issues.

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Overall, the citizens of Yolo County have shown an active interest in water resource management in the county, as demonstrated by the level participation in the community workshops for development of the IRWMP (**Appendix D**). The community workshops have been successful both as a forum to educate the community about the WRA and the IRWMP, as well as to inform the water resource management planning process about community concerns. Several possible tools could be used to keep the public at large and specific stakeholder groups involved in the implementation of the actions described in the IRWMP by the WRA and member agencies, including:

- Program-level annual conference or community workshop – Annual meetings to update the public about the progress that has been made in implementing the IRWMP, and to receive feedback on the water resource management issues from the community. This input can be used to assist the WRA in updating the IRWMP effort and ensuring progress on priority actions.
- Project-Specific Community Meetings – Meetings to inform the public and receive public input about specific integrated projects being planned, developed and implemented. In some cases the WRA may be able to use an existing forum (e.g., community meetings organized by the LPCCC) for its outreach efforts.
- Local Stakeholder Meetings – Smaller meetings that involve specific local groups, landowners and agencies (e.g., reclamation districts) to discuss and receive feedback on a particular integrated project or action.
- Periodic Mailings, Press Releases and Other Material – Numerous opportunities exist to distribute information about the implementation of the IRWMP and the WRA’s other programs. These mailings and press releases are most effective when they are coordinated with community meetings or other public events.
- WRA Website – The WRA website has become a useful tool for distributing documents, announcements and news about the IRWMP and WRA activities. The website can be used to keep the public informed about implementation of specific integrated projects or actions, and serves as a place where the public can provide comments on the WRA activities, IRWMP, or related resource matters.

### **6.6 Items for Early Action**

The process and collaboration of WRA member agencies and non-member agencies and entities in formulating the Yolo County IRWMP has created the impetus for implementation. There are several examples to illustrate this fact including the following:

- The cities of Davis and Woodland and the University of California, Davis’ work in pursuing a regional water supply project to improve water quality and future water supply reliability.

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- The completed and ongoing work of the Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee along Putah Creek.
- The recommendation of the TC with support from the WRA Board of Directors during the preparation of the IRWMP to allocate planning grant funding to advance work on the Cache Creek Integrated Project.
- The early efforts of the Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District, Yolo County, and the City of Woodland to create a management structure and pursue resolution of Cache Creek flood management issues in concert with other elements of the Cache Creek Integrated Project and to address existing flood related problems affecting towns and cities.
- The efforts of the Yolo Bypass Working Group in working toward a more formalized organizational structure and establishing a subcommittee to prioritize actions.

The energy and collaborative approach displayed through the preparation of the IRWMP and commitment of the participants as illustrated above was absent at the conclusion of previous water planning efforts, and so the results were limited. Accordingly, it is now critical that action is taken to provide a seamless transition from the IRWMP formulation to its implementation. To enhance the chances of success for IRWMP implementation it is imperative that attention be devoted immediately to address the items discussed below.

**6.6.1 Legal Structure of WRA**

The role of the WRA to function as the fiscal agent for securing funding opportunities and coordination of water resource activities requires modification of its legal structure. Under its present form the WRA is not able to enter into a contract to receive funding from state and federal programs. It was for this reason the Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District served as the fiscal agent to the Proposition 50 planning grant that provided funding for preparation of this IRWMP. This modification should be made immediately, with full consideration of the future role and functions of the WRA as described in Section 6, and specifically to take advantage of the subsequent Proposition 50 funding opportunities scheduled for 2007.

**6.6.2 Integrated Actions—Lead Partner and Partnership Commitment**

The structure for management and implementation for each integrated action will necessarily be tailored to the specific needs of the particular sub-region or sub-watershed and partners involved. As a consequence the structure for each will likely be different and require a different role and approach by the WRA.

The lead partner(s) referred to in the IRWMP should formally confirm their commitment with the WRA to manage and coordinate work aimed at implementation of the IRWMP in their

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respective sub-regions, and to establish the management structure deemed most effective for implementing the integrated action. Although the WRA has no responsibility for implementation of the integrated actions, it does have a commitment to the community to enhance the management of water and related resources in the county. In the interest of fulfilling its commitment to the community it is looking to continue and strengthen the collaborative relationships among the WRA member agencies and non-member entities alike. This can only be accomplished with the full cooperation of the lead partner(s) involved with each integrated action.

**6.6.3 WRA/Lead Partner Communications Protocol**

The management structure for implementing each integrated action as noted previously will be different. The level of effort and activities being implemented for each integrated action will be different as well. Nevertheless it is important that the communication between the WRA and the lead partner(s) be sufficient for the WRA to be informed of the work, progress, and/or problems related to implementation of each integrated action in order to provide support and facilitation when appropriate while keeping the community informed. What is deemed to be sufficient for one sub-region may or may not be sufficient for another. To this end the WRA should identify general guidelines that reflect its expectations for communication with the leadership of the integrated actions. These guidelines would serve as the basis for discussing and establishing a preliminary protocol for communication with the leadership of each integrated action. Particular attention should be given to the communities and coordination involving the Putah Creek and Yolo Bypass Integrated Projects, both of which have lead partners that are not WRA members.

**6.6.4 Work Plan Refinement**

Work plans are presented in Section 7.0 to serve as a guideline or basis for initiating work for each of the integrated actions. As the lead partner(s) begins to implement the activities presented in each work plan, they will undoubtedly find the need to refine the activities and establish an order of priority as to the extent of the effort that can be implemented at any one time will be driven by the available time and budget resources. The work plan refinements should occur upon establishing the respective lead partners and management structure or concurrently if possible. When appropriate, intra-regional partnerships should be considered. Also, work plans may require coordination amongst the various Integrated Actions.

**6.6.5 Funding Opportunities**

There are several existing funding opportunities for various components of the integrated actions, including both planning and implementation grants through the second round of funding under Proposition 50, Chapter 8. As an early part of the planning for implementing the integrated actions the lead partner(s) should review their respective work plans to identify funding opportunities. These should be reviewed among with TC in order that the most

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effective strategy for pursuing and maximizing particular funding for the respective integrated actions can be the product of the continued collaborative process.

There are a variety of funding sources that currently exist as well as those that are being proposed for voter approval this year and those that may emerge in future to assist in funding foundational and integrated actions, or components of integrated actions, contained in the IRWMP. As noted in Section 6.2.5, an important responsibility of the TC will be to stay informed of the funding opportunities and through the collaborative process ensure that the lead partners of the respective integrated actions stay informed as well. In most cases implementation of an integrated action will require funding from more than one funding source due to a combination of factors, including funding restrictions in terms of amount and purpose, strong competition for limited funds, financing challenges where matching funds are required, and the level of local funding that is available.

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