

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The San Diego Region Functionally Equivalent Storm Water Resource Plan (SWRP) has been prepared for the San Diego Region, which consists of nine Watershed Management Areas (WMAs) within San Diego County as defined by the County Municipal Storm Water Permit Order (R9-2013-0001), and contains the region's largest hydrologic units (HUs), which extend to Orange and Riverside Counties adjacent to the north and east, and into Mexico to the south. The WMAs are further composed of hydrologic areas and sub-areas that have been designated in the Municipal Storm Water Permit. All of the San Diego County WMAs drain from higher elevations in the east to coastal waters (e.g., lagoons, estuaries, bays) in the west. The upper portions of the larger WMAs are generally less populated and urbanized. As the region's rivers and creeks flow to the coastal areas, population and urbanization increase, with greater impervious surfaces and potential non-point source pollution. A greater number of State 303d listed impaired water bodies generally characterize the lower portions of the WMAs. The region's rivers and creeks are characterized by increased seasonal surface flow from rain events in the winter and spring months. During the dry season from April to September, base flows decrease significantly and rivers and creeks may become dry unless sufficient groundwater flows are present. In urbanized areas, dry-weather flows from seepage from landscape irrigation may occur. Non-storm water flows from the municipal separate storm sewer system are prohibited under the San Diego County Municipal Storm Water Permit.

Much work has been done by the San Diego Copermittees to date to define the water quality conditions in the San Diego WMAs through over ten years of monitoring and reporting. High priority water quality conditions have been defined in the Water Quality Improvement Plans (WQIPs) prepared by the Copermittees in accordance with the San Diego County Municipal Storm Water Permit. These high priority water quality conditions include fecal indicator bacteria in coastal waters and hydromodification in a number of WMAs. Additional priority water quality conditions are defined in the WQIPs. Interim and final water quality goals and the strategies and timelines to meet these goals are defined in the WQIPs for each WMA. This SWRP guides project sponsors to develop and submit projects that meet these goals and are consistent with the priorities, strategies, and timelines of the WQIPs.

A goal of the SWRP is to identify opportunities to enhance utilization of storm water as a resource. The San Diego Region has been successful in collecting and using storm water for water supply in reservoirs located in the upper elevations of several WMAs. Limited groundwater aquifers and low permeability soils have limited beneficial use of storm water in the lower more urbanized portions of the WMAs. Beneficial uses of collected storm water and dry weather flows are further assessed in the SWRP to address the goal of using storm water as a resource. This

analysis includes a public parcel assessment and a quantitative analysis of the opportunities for storm water capture and beneficial uses, including recharge into groundwater aquifers, irrigation, and diversion and treatment at an existing facility for potable use. The quantification of these opportunities was then used to assess and prioritize listed SWRP projects to assess the water supply benefit provided by these projects compared to the larger set of opportunities.

Watershed and regional plans have been developed that identify opportunities, strategies, and priority conditions and goals for water quality, water resources, flood management, community, and natural resource benefits within San Diego County. The San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan is a regional plan that identifies water resource goals and priorities. The WQIPs, IRWM Plan, and other flood management, natural resource, and capital project plans form the basis for this SWRP.

The California State Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 985 requiring regions to develop SWRPs in order to receive grants for storm water and non-storm water runoff capture projects from any voter-approved bond after January 1, 2014, including the Proposition 1 bond act. The goal of a SWRP is to prioritize those storm-water-related projects that most effectively address the regional and watershed-based storm water water quality and beneficial use goals. This SWRP achieves this goal by guiding project sponsors to develop and submit projects that provide multiple benefits to maximize water supply, water quality, environmental, flood, and other community benefits, and are prioritized in existing watershed-based plans that have specific water quality and beneficial use goals for storm water and dry-weather flows. Project sponsors are further guided to develop quantitative measures to assess and demonstrate that projects meet these watershed-based goals. Storm water and dry-weather flow water quality and beneficial use projects (or projects that have these as key elements) applying for Proposition 1 grant funding must be listed in a SWRP.

The San Diego SWRP has been developed in accordance with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) SWRP Guidelines (Guidelines; December 15, 2015). Per these Guidelines, a plan can be based on existing planning documents and local ordinances as a “functionally equivalent Plan”. The San Diego SWRP is a functionally equivalent plan that uses existing regional and watershed plans, such as the WQIPs and IRWM Plan, and has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of California Water Code section 10560 et seq. The demonstration of compliance with the SWRP Guidelines is documented in the index of California Water Code requirements in the SWRP chapters that address the checklist and self-certification in Appendix A. This SWRP is a regional storm water planning document prepared in accordance with the SWRP Guidelines to encourage multi-benefit storm water, water quality, and beneficial use project development and to meet requirements for application of projects in the County of San Diego for state grant funding under Proposition 1 and other future funding opportunities.

The County of San Diego and the San Diego Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Copermittees have prepared this SWRP, which includes nine of the WMAs within the county. The SWRP approach allows for consistency across the region with project evaluation criteria, prioritization, metrics, and measurement methods described in the Guidelines. As this is a functionally equivalent SWRP that builds on existing regional and watershed plans, project

identification and development is completed through these other planning efforts. By bringing these plans together as part of this SWRP, this plan provides the tools for project sponsors to work regionally and on a watershed basis to better integrate projects that provide multiple benefits. This integration is achieved through the project integrated analysis and prioritization tools for listing in this SWRP, which are presented in Section 5 as flow charts and examples of project analysis and scoring, and in a checklist provided in Appendix E.

SWRP-listed projects will undergo an additional quantification analysis and prioritization for water quality and water supply benefits. This additional assessment compares the quantities that project sponsors provided for these benefits to the regional set of projects. An additional color scoring is provided for the storm water water quality benefit to further quantify and prioritize the listed projects. The prioritization for water quality projects provides a comparison of the level of benefit provided to the watershed goals and priorities presented in the current, applicable WQIP. For water supply projects, prioritization is based on a comparison of the storm water capture and use annual volumes with those of the larger set of opportunities identified and quantified through the public parcel assessment. This additional prioritization is incorporated into the SWRP Online Project Tracking and Integration (OPTI) system. The prioritization process can be accessed online through the IRWM OPTI system.¹

To submit a project for inclusion in this SWRP, a project sponsor uses the three-step online SWRP project checklist. Project sponsors complete the checklist by responding to questions on project eligibility (step 1), project metrics (step 2), and watershed prioritization (step 3). More detailed discussion and examples of each of the steps and the scoring is provided in Chapter 5. The SWRP has been structured to ensure this plan remains current and provides an ongoing planning tool for the identification and development of multi-benefit projects that meet regional and watershed planning goals. Once the checklist is completed, an overall score will be generated, along with an additional color score based on the project quantities provided for projects with water quality and/or water supply as a main benefit, and the project will be listed in the SWRP project database. This can be done at any time. The project list will be continually updated as projects are identified and developed through existing watershed and regional planning documents, and added or updated using the online checklist tool. OPTI allows applicants to periodically update project information to improve the scoring and ranking of projects through greater multiple benefit integration and development of project quantitative measurements identified as project metrics. Updates can be made prior to grant solicitations by using the online system.

Additional tools to supplement existing regional and watershed plans are provided in the SWRP to identify and develop storm water capture and beneficial use opportunities through the public parcel assessment and mapping presented in Section 5.2 and Appendix H. Opportunities to consider multi-benefit stream and riparian habitat restoration and enhancement are provided in public parcel assessment and mapping tools in Appendix E. Worksheets that provide suggested

¹ Available at <http://irwm.rmwater.com/sd/login.php>.

methods and example calculations to determine the quantifiable measures of how a project will achieve the benefits are provided in Appendix G.

As grant solicitations through Proposition 1 are announced, project sponsors will need to check specific project eligibility and grant application requirements. The SWRP project checklist addresses the SWRP Guidelines, which cover storm water capture projects, the IRWM Program, and conservation projects with water quality elements. Additional project information is generally required in grant-specific applications. Submission of grant applications is the responsibility of the grant sponsor and is a separate effort from development of this SWRP.

The SWRP brings together regional planning on storm water management, and will be incorporated into the San Diego IRWM Plan to fulfill this need. The SWRP is integrated into the IRWM Plan through the adoption of the SWRP by the IRWM governing body (the San Diego Regional Water Management Group or RWMG). The online SWRP project checklist and listing tool is part of the IRWM regional project database. Calls for projects for future grant solicitations will be done through the IRWM outreach efforts.