

# Regional Water Authority

## Strategic Plan

Adopted July 2009



## **RWA Members and Board Representatives**

California American Water – Andy Soulé\*  
Carmichael Water District – Paul Selsky, Steve Nugent\*  
Citrus Heights Water District – Joe Dion\*, Bob Churchill  
Del Paso Manor Water District – John Downing, Debra Sedwick  
El Dorado Irrigation District – Bill George\*  
Fair Oaks Water District – Randy Marx, Tom Gray  
City of Folsom – Ken Payne\*, Walt Sadler  
Fruitridge Vista Water Company – Robert Cook, Sr., Robert Cook, Jr.  
Golden State Water Company – Paul Schubert\*, Ernie Gisler  
City of Lincoln – Spencer Short, Kent Nakata  
Orange Vale Water Company – Michael Schaeffer, Sharon Wilcox  
Placer County Water Agency – Gray Allen\*, Dave Breninger  
Rancho Murieta Community Services District – Robert Kjome, Ed Crouse  
City of Roseville – Pauline Roccucci, Derrick Whitehead  
Rio Linda/Elverta Community Water District – Cathy Hood, Gilbert Tafoya  
City of Sacramento – Sandy Sheedy, Marty Hanneman  
Sacramento Suburban Water District – Neil Schild, Rob Roscoe\*  
San Juan Water District – Pam Tobin, Shauna Lorance\*  
City of West Sacramento – William Kristoff, Dan Mount

\* Denotes Executive Committee Members

### **Associate Members**

El Dorado County Water Agency  
Sacramento Municipal Utility District  
Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District

### **Staff**

John Woodling, Executive Director  
Nancy Marrier, Finance and Administrative Services Officer  
Rob Swartz, Principal Project Manager  
Linda Higgins, Associate Project Manager  
Cecilia Partridge, Executive Assistant

### **Strategic Plan Consulting Team**

Ken Kirby, Kirby Consulting Group  
Greg Young, Tully and Young  
Christine Kohn, INCommunications

## Foreword

I am pleased to present the 2009 Regional Water Authority Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan reflects not only a recognition that the external influences affecting water managers in the greater Sacramento region have changed, but also that the Regional Water Authority itself has matured since its inception in July 2001.

Although you are reading these words, I urge you to think of the RWA Strategic Plan not as a static document, but as a roadmap that will guide the organization toward achieving its goals on a daily, monthly and annual basis for the next five years. This Strategic Plan will help RWA continue its success of the past eight years, but we will be successful only to the extent that we “live” rather than just read the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan will be essential to decision making as new challenges and opportunities arise for RWA.

Shauna Lorance, Chair  
Regional Water Authority

These are exciting times for water managers in the greater Sacramento region and throughout California. While considerable challenges lie ahead, we will also have numerous opportunities. We are better positioned to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities because of the investments we have made in regional collaboration over the last two decades.

I want to thank the Strategic Planning Committee for their efforts to bring this Strategic Plan to fruition. Committee Members included:

Paul Selsky, Carmichael Water District  
Bob Churchill, Citrus Heights Water District  
Tom Gallier and David Eggerton, El Dorado Irrigation District  
Paul Schubert, Golden State Water Company  
Gray Allen and Brian Martin, Placer County Water Agency  
Ed Crouse, Rancho Murieta Community Services District  
Derrick Whitehead, City of Roseville  
Dan Sherry, City of Sacramento  
Rob Roscoe, Sacramento Suburban Water District

I look forward to working with all RWA members and our partners in implementing this Strategic Plan.

John Woodling, Executive Director  
Regional Water Authority

## Mission

**To serve and represent the regional water supply interests, and to assist Members in protecting and enhancing the reliability, availability, affordability, and quality of water resources.**

*In support of the mission we seek to preserve the water rights and entitlements of Members and maintain area-of-origin protections.*

## Background

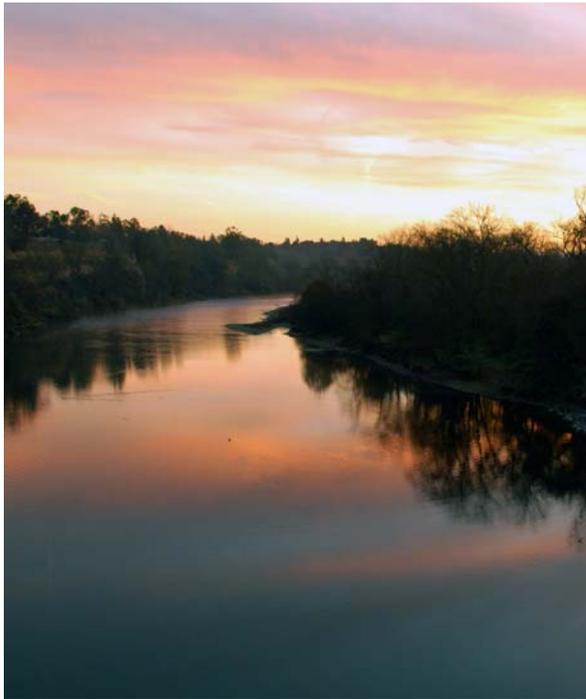
The Regional Water Authority (RWA) is a joint powers authority (JPA) formed in July 2001 as a forum to discuss and address regional water issues. RWA formed after an extensive 18-month review process to determine the most appropriate type of organization to assist local water suppliers in implementing the historic Water Forum Agreement (sidebar). RWA has nineteen members and three associate members in Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado Counties. Most RWA members are also signatories of the Water Forum Agreement. One of the great strengths of RWA is the diversity of its membership. RWA members include cities, water districts, mutual water companies, investor owned water utilities, and community services districts. A nine-member Executive Committee is elected annually to guide RWA.

While the Water Forum Agreement was an initial driver in RWA's formation, both the geographic scope and the breadth of issues addressed by RWA has grown over time. RWA has had a number of successes in its relatively short lifetime, including:

- Facilitating implementation of a regional conjunctive use program that supports reduced diversions from the American River in dry years,
- Undertaking the preparation of the American River Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, and overseeing its implementation,
- Developing the Regional Water Efficiency Program, which assists members in implementing water conservation best management practices in a cost effective manner and in communicating water efficiency information to the public,
- Tracking and responding to state and federal legislation and policy and its potential impact on members, and
- Obtaining and managing more than \$50 million of state and federal grant funds to conduct planning and implement water supply, water quality, and environmental restoration projects.

## Vision

**Through regional cooperation and collaboration we improve our members' abilities to effectively manage water resources to provide high quality water supplies to the public at a reasonable cost, to promote a sustainable environment, and to support a vibrant economy.**



### ***The Water Forum Agreement***

*By the early 1990's, the Sacramento region had suffered three decades of litigious conflict over the American River. In 1993, the City and County of Sacramento formed the Water Forum. The Water Forum successfully brought together water purveyors, environmental groups, business and agricultural leaders, citizens, and municipal governments to find solutions for the region's water issues. Discussions and negotiations centered on two co-equal objectives; to provide a reliable water supply for planned development to the year 2030; and to protect and preserve the lower American River. The historic Water Forum Agreement was signed in 2000 by 40 stakeholder groups. The Agreement stipulates seven major elements including river flow standards, habitat management, water conservation, and groundwater management, effectively making the Agreement one of the most comprehensive integrated water management documents of its time.*



## Core Values

RWA members share a set of common values for the regional agency that are consistent with those of their own organizations. Members expect to be accountable to each other and to other stakeholders to model these values. We commit to being:

**Transparent** – We are open and honest in internal and external dealings. We encourage open participation and communication among all interested members and potentially affected people in policies, procedures and activities.

**Forward Thinking** – We are visionary and strategic in our approach to meeting challenges. We look for opportunities to address changing circumstances in proactive and innovative ways.

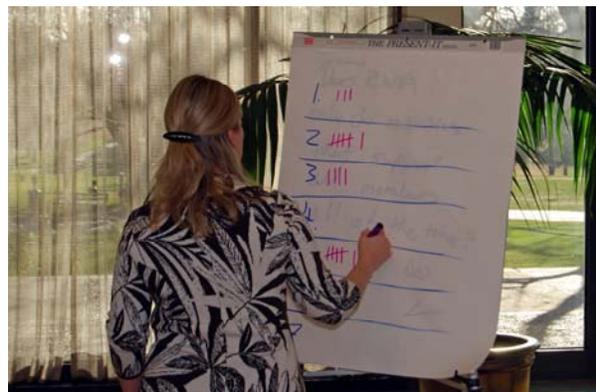
**Knowledgeable** – We maintain an understanding of current and relevant issues on local, regional, state, and national levels, and we evaluate how they may affect members and the region.

**Responsive** – We are focused on and committed to anticipating and responding to the needs of our members in accomplishing regional goals and objectives.

**Regional** – We take individual and collective actions to support mutual interests throughout the region. We communicate collective positions in a manner that both strengthens and is strengthened by the voices of the members. We consider the potential impacts of independent actions on others in our region.

**Effective** – We accomplish meaningful outcomes for the benefit of members and the region. We leverage collective resources provided by members to meet the agreed upon objectives at a lower cost than could be achieved individually.

**Credible** – We are recognized as a trusted and reliable source of information and as an organization whose actions are consistent with its stated intentions.



## Foundational Goals

RWA developed four Foundational Goals. The Foundational Goals represent our desire to consistently make progress in priority areas of activity that will serve the needs of members. Both current and future objectives and actions of RWA will be consistent with pursuing these goals.

**Goal 1** – Continuously improve an integrated regional water management plan that is comprehensive in scope and guides effective water resources management in the region.

**Goal 2** - Assist members with implementing successful water resources management strategies and related programs. This includes identifying, acquiring and administering external sources of funding.

**Goal 3** – Inform and educate members and interested parties by providing a forum for discussion of issues, outreach to stakeholders, and a clearinghouse for sharing information.

**Goal 4** – Represent regional needs and concerns to positively influence legislative and regulatory policies and actions.



# Objectives

RWA will pursue the following objectives that support the four Foundational Goals.

## **Goal 1 - Continuously improve an integrated regional water management plan that is comprehensive in scope and guides effective water resources management in the region.**

1. Develop an updated American River Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Plan that meets the state's then current requirements by June 30, 2011, or earlier if dictated by funding opportunities.
2. Update the Plan as needed thereafter, including;
  - a. Complete a study of the potential impact of climate change on water supply reliability in the region by September 30, 2011.
  - b. Evaluate opportunities to leverage existing infrastructure to maximize reliable delivery of water throughout the region by September 30, 2011.
  - c. Assess the current level of recycled water use in the region and identify the most promising opportunities for expansion of recycled water by December 31, 2011.
  - d. Evaluate opportunities to coordinate groundwater management, monitoring and policy across the Placer, SGA, SCGA and South County areas of the groundwater basin and make recommendations by December 31, 2011.



**Goal 2 - Assist members with implementing successful water resources management strategies and related programs. This includes identifying, acquiring and administering external sources of funding.**

1. Develop a comprehensive two-year plan for the Regional Water Efficiency Program that incorporates member input and is aligned with the Water Forum conservation element and state conservation guidelines by September 30, 2010.
2. Identify opportunities to complete portions of Urban Water Management Plans on a regional basis by December 31, 2009 to assist members in complying with the December 31, 2010 deadline.
3. Evaluate level of compliance and assist in bringing 50% or more of RWA members into compliance with AB 1420 requirements for grant eligibility by March 30, 2010.
4. Obtain commitment of at least \$10,000,000 from sources other than RWA members to assist in funding updates to the American River Basin IRWM Plan and projects contained in the Plan by December 31, 2012.
5. Develop standardized terms and protocols for voluntary inclusion in members' individual mutual aid agreements by September 30, 2010.



**Goal 3 - Inform and educate members and interested parties by providing a forum for discussion of issues, outreach to stakeholders, and a clearinghouse for sharing information.**

1. Compile details of water shortage contingency plans (drought stages, actions, triggers, etc.) for all member agencies by December 31, 2009, and identify areas for improved consistency and coordination.
2. Educate the public about water supply conditions by developing talking points and compiling drought stage information for each RWA member by January 15 of each year, updating the information as needed throughout the year, and disseminating the information to members, media outlets, and the public. Level of effort will vary depending on conditions annually.
3. Educate local elected officials about regional water issues, including those on the RWA legislative outreach agenda, through presentations to various councils, boards or commissions at least four times annually.
4. Educate RWA member agencies and stakeholders about the work of the organization and regional water issues through consistent outreach tools, including:
  - a. Newsletters to at least 600 members and interested parties produced and distributed at least three times per calendar year.
  - b. A web site that is comprehensively updated by December 31, 2009, and maintained thereafter on an on-going basis, which will include an electronic repository of documents relating to the Water Forum and other regional water issues.
  - c. At least one half-day educational workshop for Board members and other interested parties during fiscal year 2009-10 and each year thereafter.
  - d. Presentations on RWA activities to not less than 20% of RWA members boards of directors annually.
  - e. Additional communication tools identified through a survey of members needs completed by December 31, 2009.



5. Educate RWA members about the work of the agencies and organizations listed below and coordinate regional activities with those agencies by participating in meetings, workshops, conferences or other events as needed, but at least annually. Provide briefing reports to RWA members as appropriate.
  - a. California Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Public Health, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - b. CABY and other IRWM groups in the Sacramento River Funding Area
  - c. Sacramento County Water Agency, SAFCA, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association, Northern California Water Association, and Water Resources Association of Yolo County
  - d. ACWA legislative and regulatory affairs staff as well as ACWA Region 3 and Region 4 representatives
  - e. Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce in support of Cap-to-Cap, State Legislative Day, and any additional business-water mutual interests.
6. Provide an ongoing forum for conducting the business of the organization, informing and educating members, and networking through Board meetings, Executive Committee meetings, and other Committees and special events.
7. Represent the Water Caucus in the Water Forum Successor Effort (WFSE), including:
  - a. At least twice annually, update the WFSE Plenary on the status of activities of members of the Water Caucus.
  - b. Participate fully in the WFSE coordinating committee.
  - c. Serve on the Flow Management Steering Committee through completion of the environmental documentation in late 2010.



**Goal 4 - Represent regional needs and concerns to positively influence legislative and regulatory policies and actions. This includes working to preserve the water rights and entitlements of members and maintaining area-of-origin protections.**

1. Annually beginning in 2010, and in accordance with optimal legislative timing, engage state and federal elected officials representing the region and their staff to discuss an agenda for action that represents a collective RWA member vision on items of regional importance.
2. Develop a tracking system of significant water related legislation, update it at least monthly, and make it readily available electronically to members by December 30, 2009.
3. By January 15, 2010, and annually thereafter, with the participation of members and their legislative advocates, develop a state legislative agenda and outreach plan for the region. Develop necessary supporting context and/or position papers describing RWA positions within 60 days of developing the legislative agenda and plan.
4. By January 1, 2010, and annually thereafter, with the participation of members and their legislative advocates, develop a federal legislative agenda and outreach plan for the region. Develop necessary supporting context and/or position papers describing RWA positions within 60 days of developing the legislative agenda and plan.



Courtesy of Rudy Meyers Photography

## **Strategic Planning Process**

The process employed in development of the RWA Strategic Plan was designed to seek broad input from the RWA membership and external stakeholders, while still taking advantage of the power of smaller groups to work efficiently. To meet these needs, roles were defined for three overlapping groups, a Strategic Planning Committee, the RWA Executive Committee, and the full RWA Board (and selected external stakeholders). RWA staff and a team of three consultants supported development of the plan.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

The Strategic Planning Committee was appointed by the Board Chairperson to represent the breadth of RWA membership, incorporating agencies from throughout the geographic area; small, medium, and large water providers; agencies providing wastewater as well as water service; agencies generating hydroelectric power as well as providing water service; and cities. The Committee included both elected officials and staff. The role of the Strategic Planning Committee was twofold; first, to work with staff and consultants to design the process to be followed; and second, to develop draft materials for some plan components, which were then considered by the other groups. The Committee developed objectives and a timeline for the process, developed a survey to be completed by the broader membership, refined the values and goals that came out of the Strategic Planning Workshop, and developed drafts of the Vision and Objectives. The Strategic Planning Committee met five times over the course of seven months.

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee is a nine-member panel elected by the RWA membership each year. The Executive Committee reviewed and commented on draft materials throughout the process, and ultimately recommended adoption of the mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives to the full RWA Board. Some Executive Committee members also served on the Strategic Planning Committee.

### **RWA Board**

All RWA Board members were requested to participate in an online survey, conducted at the beginning of the planning effort. All Board Members and several external stakeholders were urged to participate in the day-long Strategic Planning Workshop held February 20, 2009. Much of the work to develop the values and goals was accomplished at this workshop. In addition, the full Board reviewed and adopted the mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives, and directed staff to complete background information to compile the final plan.

## Implementation

RWA Staff, with input from the membership, will develop a plan to accomplish each of the objectives of the RWA Strategic Plan. The implementation plan will include several elements, including:

- An evaluation of RWA's capacity to meet objectives, which may identify additional resources, polices, or other factors that may be needed to meet objectives,
- A schedule and work plan to meet objectives,
- Roles and responsibilities of staff, members, and external partners,
- Performance measures and a system to track progress, and
- A mechanism for updating the Strategic Plan periodically to respond to changing conditions.



Photo courtesy of Betsy Fletcher



## NOTES

### Supporting Material

A number of supporting documents are available as appendices to the Strategic Plan, including:

- A copy of the survey employed and an evaluation of common themes in member responses,
- A summary of a day long Strategic Planning Workshop of the RWA Board and external stakeholders, and
- A list of attendees at the workshop.

Members may contact RWA staff to obtain copies of this supporting information.



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