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Section 1. Communications Plan

The many water resources-related challenges facing the Lahontan Basins region will best be addressed through cooperation and collaboration among a diverse group of stakeholders across the region. Indeed, identification of stakeholders with disparate and even conflicting interests is critical to the long-term success of the IRWM Plan. Communication of information about the region and IRWM planning process is key to effective stakeholder identification and participation.

This Communications Plan describes how the Lahontan Basins IRWMP team will conduct outreach during the Plan development phase, including, specifically, information on:

- The purpose and intended results of the communication effort, and strategies and methods to be used;
- How information will be disseminated to the general public;
- How outreach will be conducted to involve interests traditionally under-represented in IRWMPs, with special focus on project development assistance;
- How IRWM activities will be coordinated with stakeholders – those actively participating in Plan development; and
- How Lahontan Basins IRWM activities will be coordinated with other regional water management planning efforts.

Definitions

For purposes of this Communications Plan, “public” refers to the general public. “Stakeholder” refers to those who support the goals of IRWM and choose to actively participate in development of the IRWM Plan.

1.1 Purpose, Intended Results, Strategies, and Methods

1.1.1. Purpose of Communication Efforts

The purpose of the IRWMP communication efforts is to ensure that the IRWM Plan is developed based on input and involvement from a diverse group of informed local stakeholders from across the region, including, as much as possible, traditionally under-represented interests, such as Tribal interests and economically disadvantaged communities (DACs). A map of the DAC regions is displayed in **Figure 1**.(Updated July 2015)

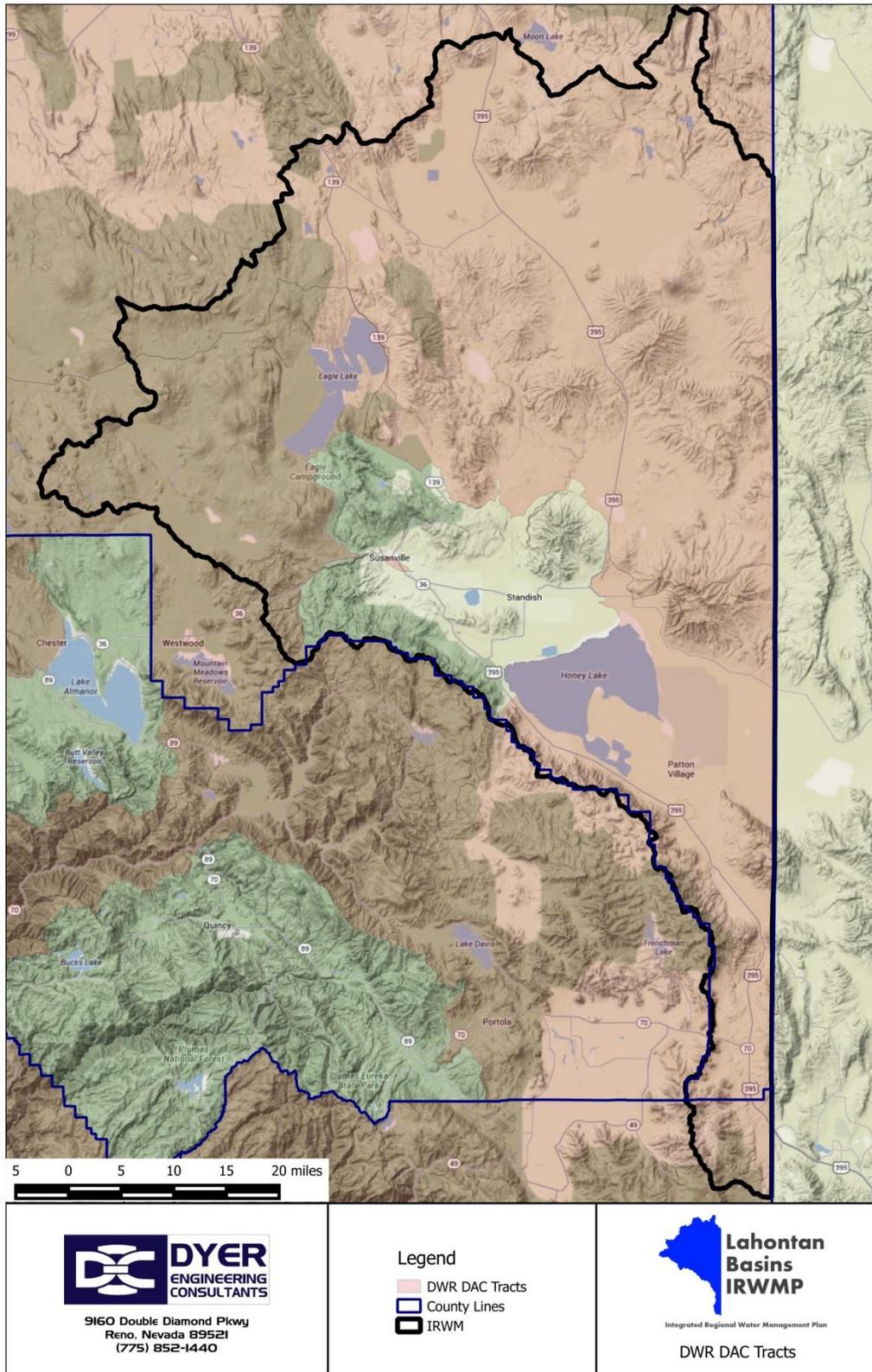


Figure 1 Designated DAC Regions

1. 1.2 Intended Results of Communication Efforts

Intended results of the communication efforts include:

- The general public has had opportunities to become aware that a regional water resources planning effort is underway, and to learn about the purpose, potential opportunities, and value of creating an IRWMP;
- Interested persons had access to materials to inform their participation (e.g., information about the region itself, the Plan development process);
- There is greater understanding and documentation of the diverse needs of the region and its people;
- Many points of view will have been considered in development of the Plan and its projects; including, to the extent possible, the points of view of interests traditionally under-represented in IRWM processes;
- Local stakeholder interests and concerns will have been represented in the Plan;
- Timely communication will have occurred between the RWMG (or its representatives) and the public, especially in those cases where public notice is required for meetings; and
- Constructive stakeholder relationships will have been developed and strengthened within the region, and between the region and adjacent regions.

1. 1.3 Communication Strategy and Methods

The overall communication strategy is to “cast a wide net” at the beginning of the planning process, see who wants to participate constructively in Plan development as an IRWMP stakeholder, work closely with those stakeholders, and inform and seek input from the general public at key milestones.

Project team members will conduct outreach efforts as appropriate.

Outreach and communication efforts will take many forms, depending on the need (e.g., provide general background information, provide notice of upcoming public meeting) and target audience (e.g., general public, stakeholders). Communication methods will include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- *Traditional media:* When required or appropriate, press releases will be distributed to the Media List in time to meet deadlines for local newspapers and radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) (KSUE) to inform the general public.
- *Electronic media (Website):* Background information, notice of public meetings, and information on Plan process and content will be posted on the Lahontan Basins IRWMP Website. A basic interim Web presence will be established (<http://honeylakevalleyrcd.us/irwm/>) while a fully functional, inter-active Website is being developed for the longer term. Basic information will be available to all; access to

some information will be restricted in order to protect privacy and otherwise ensure process integrity. To facilitate access to the Lahontan Basins IRWMP Website and its information, computers and printers may be located in several local communities (see Disadvantaged Communities section below).

- *Contact lists*: Contact lists will be developed, and notice and information will be sent (via email, U.S. mail or phone, as appropriate) to those who have provided their contact information, e.g., through sign-up sheets at meetings.
- *Personal communication*: Local representatives of the IRWMP team and consultants will communicate directly with stakeholders and interested persons (via email, telephone, or U.S. mail), as appropriate and necessary.
- *Meetings and workshops*: Meetings and workshops will be conducted at various locations within the region, and for various purposes (e.g., work groups, public meetings), as needed and appropriate.
- *Printed materials*: Printed materials will be used throughout the IRWMP development process for increasing awareness and understanding. Materials may take many forms, including IRWMP flyers to be posted and otherwise made available in public places at key milestones, educational materials provided at meetings, a limited number of hard copies of IRWMP documents as they become available, and meeting handouts to facilitate public understanding and participation.

1.2 Public Outreach

Professionally facilitated meetings will be held at the sub-regional and regional levels to make it easy for the general public to attend in this large geographic region. Public meetings will include a mix of presentations, discussions, and small-group interaction, and be conducted at key points in the planning process. Information will be designed specifically to inform and educate, and/or to encourage participation, feedback, and input by the general public. Public announcements will be disseminated as broadly as possible, and as early as possible, using the methods identified above, but no later than one week prior to the meeting, action, or decision date. Public comment opportunities and due dates will be broadly announced.

1.2.1. Sub-Regional Public Meetings

Public meetings were conducted (Table 1) in each of the outlining rural communities at key points or for specific reasons, such as:

- Announcement of the planning grant, seeking input on water-related issues and concerns as well as questions and comments about the planning process.
- Sub-regional work groups, for example, topical groups or geographic region groups.
- Determination of local interest in creating sustained local sub-groups.
- Other key milestones to be determined.

Sub-Regional Public Meetings	
Community	Date
Susanville	01/09/2014
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	02/10/2014
Herlong, PUD	03/13/2014
Honey Lake Valley RCD	01/09/2014
Lake Leavitt CSD	01/03/2014
Lassen County	01/03/2014
Lassen Irrigation Company	01/03/2014
Pine Creek TAC	12/12/2013
Spalding CSD	04/09/2014
Susan River Watershed Group	12/12/2013

Table 1 Sub-Regional Public Meetings

1.2. 2. Regional Public Meetings

Regional meetings (Table 2) were held for public education and outreach purposes, to obtain public input, and to conduct the business of the RWMG.

- The RWMG is expected to meet approximately monthly; however, meetings will be scheduled based upon specific needs. All RWMG meetings are open to the public.
- To solicit input on water-related issues of concern.
- Other key milestones to be determined.

Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) Public Meetings	
Venue	Date
Susanville Fire Department	11/21/2013
BLM Eagle Lake Field Office	12/12/2013
BLM Eagle Lake Field Office	01/09/2014
BLM Eagle Lake Field Office	02/20/2014
USDA Service Center	04/03/2014
USDA Service Center	05/08/2014
USDA Service Center	05/22/2014
USDA Service Center	07/10/2014
USDA Service Center	08/14/2014
USDA Service Center	09/25/2014
USDA Service Center	10/16/2014
USDA Service Center	11/20/2014 (Cancelled)
USDA Service Center	12/10/2014
Susanville Indian Rancheria	01/15/2015
Susanville Indian Rancheria	02/19/2015
Susanville Indian Rancheria	03/05/2015
Susanville Indian Rancheria	03/19/2015
Susanville Indian Rancheria	04/16/2015
USDA Service Center	05/28/2015

USDA Service Center	06/03/2015
City of Susanville Chambers	07/23/2015

Table 2 RWMG Public Meetings

1.3 Outreach to Under-Represented Interests

In the Lahontan Basins region, there are two major categories of interests who are traditionally under-represented in IRWMP processes: economically disadvantaged communities and Tribal interests. (Census data will be reviewed and combined with local knowledge to determine whether a third category, Hispanic/Latino communities, could qualify under this category and, if so, determine appropriate outreach strategies.)

Communication efforts to and with these interests will focus on providing information on the IRWMP process and associated opportunities in order to ensure their participation as much as possible, to encourage agencies and organizations to become involved in IRWMP governance and Plan development as stakeholders and, especially, to encourage and facilitate project development. A key focus of this outreach will be to determine needs of the affected communities and develop specific strategies for addressing those needs.

1.3. 1. Disadvantaged Communities

A “disadvantaged community” (DAC) is defined by the State of California as a community with an annual median household income (MHI) less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Census data from 2000 and 2010 were collected and reviewed to identify disadvantaged communities in the region. The 2010 State MHI was \$60,883; therefore, communities with an average MHI of \$48,706 are considered DACs.

Median Household Income* (2010)	
Community	MHI
Susanville	\$45,198
Doyle	\$43,185
Herlong	\$42,875
Litchfield	\$38,162
Spaulding	\$30,139
Patton Village	\$49,375
Milford	\$59,125
Janesville	\$72,738
Johnstonville	\$65,795

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010
*California Median Household Income \$60,883 in 2010

Table 3 MHI for the communities located in the region.

DAC Status of Communities in the Lahontan Basins IRWMP

City or Community	Population	Average Household Size	Medium Household Income (MHI)*	DAC Status
Susanville	17,947	2.46	\$45,198	DAC
Doyle	678	2.6	\$43,185	DAC
Herlong	298	3.21	\$42,875	DAC
Janesville	1,408	2.62	\$72,738	---
Johnstonville	1,024	2.77	\$65,795	---
Litchfield	195	2.8	\$38,162	DAC
Milford	167	2.42	\$59,125	---
Patton Village	702	2.43	\$49,375	---
Spalding	178	2.22	\$30,139	SDAC
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010				
*California Median Household Income \$60,883 in 2010				

Table 4 DAC status of these communities.

The evaluation indicates that a high percentage of the communities within the region are disadvantaged, and one of the DACs in the region meet the requirements for designation as severely disadvantaged (SDAC, less than or equal to 60 percent of the statewide MHI).

Many representatives of DACs, such as local officials and agency personnel, will be included on the general IRWMP contacts list and receive information through those avenues.

Initial outreach to DACs will include a basic introduction to Integrated Regional Water Management planning, including what an IRWMP is, how the planning process works, how decisions are made, avenues for involvement, potential benefits to participation, and funding and implementation processes. As appropriate, efforts will then be made to engage DAC representatives in the Plan development process, with particular attention to meeting the needs of the DAC community. DAC representatives will be encouraged to engage in RWMG deliberations and public meetings, and to, in turn, share information with their constituencies. These conversations took place at the meetings conducted in Table 1.

In IRWMPs elsewhere in the state, DAC projects are often infrastructure related. The in-region IRWMP representatives will work closely with DACs to explore a range of potential projects, such as failing or contaminated wells, or wetland restoration for the purpose of improving water quality. Meetings may be convened to focus solely on infrastructure needs and projects (as well as on wider topics).

Team members will help project sponsors through the process to develop projects from conception to the level of specificity that is required by the Plan, including completion of Step 1 Project Applications. They will also seek to identify opportunities for project collaboration

between DACs, and for integrating DAC communities into other “non-DAC” projects, as well as increasing the capacity of local DACs through direct technical support wherever possible.

Direct assistance and capacity-building is available for DACs in the form of technical assistance for needs assessment identification, project development, assistance with outreach to entities that can provide no- or low-cost assistance and other similar activities. This technical support can include assistance with project development and preparing project applications, e.g., development of work plan, schedule, budget, and measurable outcomes. The Project Team may also assist with clarifying environmental evaluation and permitting concerns, or activities supporting the integration of individual projects into both the Plan and program-specific aggregated projects (i.e., “bundled” projects). The Project Team will work with project sponsors through phone conversations, site visits, email correspondence, meetings, and region-wide project development workshops to ensure DAC participation is optimized.

1.3.2. Tribal Interests

The Project Team preparing this Plan will partner with the California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) to reach out to Tribal interests (federally recognized and non-federally recognized) and encourage their active involvement in Plan development. CIEA is a non-profit organization comprised of Tribal representatives and advocates. CIEA’s program work focuses primarily on mining contaminants that affect fish, an important traditional subsistence food for Tribal members. CIEA’s information network is strong and CIEA staff recognizes the opportunities presented by the IRWMP to improve fisheries health and other water-related issues of concern to Tribes.

Team members and CIEA staff will collaborate on development of outreach materials and choice of outreach methods. Many Tribal outreach efforts will involve a two-part process, with initial contact by CIEA staff, followed by communications from local IRWM representatives or team members. Changes in Tribal leadership are not uncommon, and team members will work with CIEA staff to ensure current contact information for each outreach effort.

Tribal interests will be encouraged to consider participation in IRWMP governance and decision-making processes, as well as development of a Tribal work group. Barriers to Tribal involvement will be explored, with the intent to work together to identify and implement solutions, working within State Guidelines. The Susanville Indian Rancheria is a member of the MOU and the RWMG.

Additional Tribal outreach and capacity building will focus on project development, with personal contact to ascertain interest in participation and, if there is interest, to provide individual assistance in project development, including completion of Step 1 Project Applications to the

level of specificity required in the Plan. The team will also work to identify opportunities for collaboration between Tribal interests and sponsors of non-Tribal projects during the project integration phase.

1.4 Stakeholder Outreach

Stakeholders, those who have chosen to actively participate in the planning process, will serve as a link to the broader community, especially those who share their particular interests and concerns. Stakeholders will serve in various substantive capacities, including on the RWMG, as a “sounding board” for the RWMG, and providing review and recommendation on IRWMP documents.

The RWMG will determine its own make up, within the parameters defined in the State Guidelines, as well as establish Work Groups and Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) where necessary or if sufficient interest exists, which stakeholders will be encouraged to serve on to ensure broad and diverse input and involvement.

The RWMG will identify any specific program areas that should be represented, and will work to ensure that stakeholders from the various geographic areas of this large region are included.

The IRWMP team will communicate directly with RWMG stakeholders as necessary, and through whatever methods are necessary and appropriate, to ensure that the IRWMP process results in timely and effective IRWM Plan development.

The RWMG or its representatives will communicate with the public through traditional and electronic media at key points in the Plan development process to ensure adequate opportunities for public input and document review.

1.5 Interregional Communication

To facilitate coordination across IRWMP boundaries, members of the consulting team will participate in interregional meetings during Plan development. These meetings (Table 5) are attended by local, state, and federal agencies involved in State Integrated Regional Water Management Plan processes for the purpose of information sharing and collaboration. Consultants will provide summary reports to the RWMG following these meetings as appropriate.

Interregional Communication Meetings	
Agency	Date
UC Davis Cooperative Extension	03/10/2014
Sierra Water Workgroup	Quarterly Meetings
Sierra Water Workgroup Summit	06/12/2014 - 06/13/2014
Statewide Flood Management Planning Program	07/09/2014

Table 5 Interregional Meetings

Section 2. DAC Capacity Building

The State IRWMP Guidelines provide for assistance to help build the capacity of traditionally under-represented interests in state water-planning endeavors. The intention is for these interests to be able to participate in IRWM Plan development and implementation in a meaningful way. In the Lahontan Basins IRWMP region, under-represented interests include economically disadvantaged communities and communities where Environmental Justice (EJ) issues exist or may exist, such as with Tribes and Latino/Hispanic communities. EJ consideration seeks to address inequitable distribution of environmental burdens (e.g., dumping of environmental wastes) and access to environmental goods (e.g., clean water, parks, and recreation facilities).

IRWMP Project Team members worked to assess the capacity of under-represented interests and, where necessary, help increase their capacity to participate. This document describes those efforts for both DAC and EJ interests in the Lahontan Basins region.

2.1 Capacity Building during Plan Development

DAC (see above discussion) and EJ communities were key target audiences for outreach and communication efforts from the inception of the planning process. As described earlier in the Lahontan Basins IRWMP Communications Plan and per the IRWM Guidelines, the purpose of those efforts was *“to ensure that the IRMW Plan is developed based on input and involvement from a diverse group of informed local stakeholders from across the region, including as much as possible, traditionally under-represented interests, such as Tribal interests and economically disadvantaged communities.”*

While RWMG formally adopted the IRWMP Communications Plan in April 2014, outreach to Tribes and DACs had actually begun several months earlier (Table 1). The capacity-building effort was kicked off in December 2013 when the IRWMP grant and initial sub-regional meetings were announced via email, phone, U.S. mail and local media. Conversations about

interest and capacity to participate began at that time as discussed previously in this Communications Plan.

Early outreach messages to DAC and EJ interests focused on building an understanding of the IRWMP process, as well as on how participation in the planning process could augment their existing efforts and activities.

2.1. 1. Economically Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)

Initial outreach announcing the IRWMP process and associated opportunities included all DACs in the Lahontan Basins region. Project Team members continued to provide extensive assessment, coordination, outreach, and support to water purveyors and water and land management interests in DACs.

Assessment of DAC Capacity-Building Needs. Outreach efforts included identifying the challenges and needs of the DACs for all aspects of the planning process, with special focus on project development to address identified needs. Organizational capacity needs were assessed through meetings, one-on-one interviews, and conversations with DAC representatives. The following needs were identified:

- Increased staffing to be able to attend meetings and participate in any collaborative process;
- Increased funding or other resources to support staff activities (e.g., engineering, design, future planning efforts, grant writing, and word processing);
- Forums to share information and problem-solve on issues or topics of mutual concern;
- Increased knowledge of grant-writing processes and cost/benefit analyses, and potential funding sources; and
- Professional training for board members and management staff.

Meeting DAC Needs: Capacity-Building Efforts. Addressing some of the above DAC stated needs (e.g., increased staffing and funding) is not within the purview or timeline of the IRWMP process and therefore were not a direct target of the capacity-building efforts. Capacity-building efforts focused on needs that fell within the scope of the IRWMP and were identified as priorities by the DACs themselves, including project development. These efforts included design and delivery of a series of capacity-building workshops, design and delivery of resource materials, provision of direct technical support, and establishment of a forum for ongoing information exchange and support.

Workshops. Two workshops (Table 6) were designed and delivered for purposes of building capacity to participate successfully in Plan development and implementation, with special focus on fundraising:

Public Workshops	
Location	Date
Susanville Fire Department	03/12/2014
Susanville Indian Rancheria	03/25/2014

Table 6 Public Workshops

- Identifying Potential Funding Sources (outside of California DWR):** Attendees were introduced to successful funding applications for the region; were provided a strategy that the RWMG could adopt to cover the cost of environmental review; and were provided a list of public and private grant sources, contact information, and applicability to project type. Project sponsors who had successfully secured grant and other project funding within the region were identified as additional resources to help others. The funding source list has been appended to the Lahontan Basins IRWMP for reference and update in the future.

*CFCC Funding Fairs have created a great forum identifying additional funding measures.

- How to Perform Cost/Benefit Analyses:** This training was offered in June 2014 to assist project sponsors in gaining a working familiarity with the various considerations of a cost/benefit analysis. The workshop may also assist participants in using their existing projects as ‘guinea pigs’ for the integrating the trainings into a real-world analysis.

Materials development. To simplify the Project Application process for DAC/EJ representatives, the Project Team developed written Project Development Templates that included step-by-step instructions for developing work plans, schedules, budgets, and the like. The templates, available electronically, were widely used.

Other materials, such as scoring criteria for funding applications, funding sources, and conflict resolution draft materials were provided in consecutive draft form until a final format was adopted. These were then incorporated into the Plan.

Direct technical support. Project team members worked directly and extensively with individual staff of all the DACs that had a community service district, as well as with the Tribe to provide the following direct technical support:

- Assistance in identifying and developing needs assessments;

- Assistance in identifying processes and source materials for developing educational materials for customers, e.g., water quality, irrigation efficiency, water conservation;
- Assistance in connecting staff to free or low-cost support for evaluating and/or adjusting rates to cover costs (capital improvements, operation and maintenance, etc.);
- Support in developing projects in response to needs assessments; and
- Use of the Project Review Committee as a venue to work with others in the region to do project integration (e.g., leak detection program), with a goal of identifying benefits of economy of scale.

IRWMP team members also introduced DAC representatives to the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), a federally funded non-profit program that exists solely to support and help build the capacity of small, rural, and disadvantaged communities with a population of 50,000 or fewer. Through the RCAC, DACs and Tribes can receive technical support, assistance on board and management training, rate evaluation and updates of rates, capital improvement Plan development assistance, and other topics of concern to rural water purveyors.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC served as a forum for information sharing, as a venue for identifying project gaps relative to stated objectives, and as a sort of “technical support committee” where committee members provided direct technical support to each other. All DACs are members of the Project Review Committee. The TAC met roughly every quarter throughout Plan preparation (via RWMG meetings) and will continue to meet at least twice annually during Plan implementation.

Recruitment to participate in RWMG. Because inclusion of projects in a DWR grant application requires the project sponsor to adopt the IRWMP, the Lahontan Basins RWMG has considered that adoption of the Plan will result in inclusion of the entity as a member of the RWMG. Using this mechanism, all of the DACs are likely to have representation within the RWMG.

2.2 Capacity Building for Plan Implementation

To ensure the long-term success of the IRWM Plan, it will be important to have continued participation by the DAC/EJ communities for the life of the document, including during Plan implementation and for future Plan revisions. Two key efforts were undertaken to help ensure sustained participation of these under-represented interests: establishment of a continuing forum for information sharing and problem solving, and development of a Project Development manual.

Meetings will be held annually at minimum, or more frequently as required. Committee responsibilities, at minimum, are to:

- Identify gaps between identified Plan objectives and projects identified by sponsors;
- Provide a venue for project integration; and
- Provide technical support by committee members in the course of project development.