



PREFACE

San Gabriel River

“In just a few short months with unprecedented levels of cooperation and commitment, the leaders of many organizations have produced a plan that will guide us for the next 20 years.”

—Donald L. Wolfe, Chair of the Leadership Committee

The purpose of this Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP or Plan) is to define a clear vision and direction for the sustainable management of water resources in the Greater Los Angeles County Region (Region) for the next 20 years, present the basic information regarding possible solutions and the costs and benefits of those solutions, and to inspire the Region and potential funding partners outside this Region. Moreover, it is to adopt solutions that make sense, are good for the community, and are economically feasible.

The IRWMP Leadership Committee (Committee) acknowledged in early 2006 an intention to develop a plan which identified a comprehensive set of solutions and associated cost estimates to achieve quantitative targets in the next 20 years for water supply (including reduced dependence on imported water supply and cleanup of local groundwater and stormwater), in-stream water quality, habitat improvement, and additional parks and open space, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The Committee also acknowledged that the local economy will benefit from solutions that provide clean water, clean beaches, and the sustainable management of water resources. These solutions, and the magnitude of the potential costs, will require development of a significant (i.e., multi-billion dollar) local funding source, and this IRWMP can serve as the basis to support development of this funding source and help local jurisdictions comply with regulatory mandates such as total maximum daily loads (TMDL). Outside funding sources, such as the state and federal government, are more likely to support and fund this Plan because it demonstrates an intent to solve local problems, rather than simply look for others to solve those problems. As this planning process has included the creation of quantitative goals for measurable progress and accountability, it will lead to the identification of solutions and partnerships to implement these solutions.

Many of the stakeholders that have participated in Steering Committees, attended workshops, or otherwise assisted in the development of this IRWMP recognize that today's challenges are in part due to the historical approach of addressing water resource management from a single-purpose perspective. For example, this Region has one of the most effective flood control systems in the world that protects millions of people from the impacts of flooding in a Region where the flow in its rivers can increase from 200 cubic feet per second (cfs) to over 200,000 cfs within 48 hours. This system routes much of the stormwater runoff into the ocean, water that historically recharged local groundwater basins, making this Region even more dependent on imported water supplies. As regulatory pressures to clean up polluted dry and wet weather stormwater runoff continue, this source of water supply is becoming attractive once again. Developing and funding the appropriate multipurpose solutions over the next 20 years will require extensive stakeholder commitment. Although no single funding source will be sufficient to meet the Region's needs, outside funding partners will be attracted if local agencies take the lead and make commitments to solving these problems. Therefore, this Plan includes an implementation cost analysis to help support development of a local funding measure which can be used to leverage a combination of other local, state and federal funding sources.

In addition, water resources must be planned in concert with the other issues that make up the urban context. Therefore, the Plan's recommendations and strategies have been developed such that they can be integrated into the strategic planning for other important urban issues such as transportation, public education, land use, economic development, and health and safety. Because of the importance of these things to every community, there are many opportunities for win-win relationships that help create more functionally

integrated communities and improve quality of life as the population of our Region continues to grow. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Compass Growth Vision Report (SCAG, 2004) suggests concentrating future growth on only two percent of the SCAG region's land area. This will lead to more varied development and density patterns, create a greater sense of place, and enhance infrastructure function (e.g., increased density around transportation hubs, or adjacent to river greenway corridors). The concepts that are emerging out of the first phase of this IRWMP process support this strategy by providing a variety of project approaches for different density and land use situations, that can unify and connect these diverse areas, such as a strategy for creating green corridors around the Region's rivers and creeks. The solutions in the IRWMP respond to statewide priorities, allow for local variation, while also creating a unified and coherent ecological system across the Region.

This Plan is intended to be a tool for the development of solutions that achieve the planning targets identified for the Region and improve the sustainability of water resources and ecological health of local watersheds. The residents of the Region will benefit from the projects and opportunities identified in this Plan, as more sustainable water resources can improve the quality of life for all communities. The residents of the state will benefit from this Plan, as any gallon of water saved in this Region, is a gallon saved for the entire state. New partnerships have arisen out of Subregional and Regional stakeholder meetings and workshops during the preparation of this document and many more partnerships are expected to develop and grow. This Plan should be considered a living document. The vision, ideas and project concepts contained in this Plan will only become a reality if stakeholders remain engaged as this process continues.