

Appendix G: Climate Change Vulnerability Checklist



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Climate Change Vulnerability Checklist

Changes related to climate change in the IRWM guidelines made between the 2010 and 2012 versions need to be addressed. The new IRWM plan must include a list of prioritized vulnerabilities based on the vulnerability assessment checklist as well as a plan, program, or methodology for further data gathering and analysis of the prioritized vulnerabilities. Below is the vulnerability assessment checklist for the Upper Santa Ana River IRWM planning area.

Water Demand:

Are there major industries that require cooling/processed water in your planning region?

- The Mountain View power plant brings power to more than 685,000 homes. This high energy output requires the plant to utilize municipal effluent as well as ground water for cooling. The facility loses 3,300 gallons of water per minute to evaporation from the cooling towers, but for every pound of water that evaporates approximately 1,000 BTUs of heat are extracted. It also has a water treatment plant on site that recovers 75-80% of water that would normally have been disposed of. This recycling process has kept Redlands waste water fees at some of the lowest levels in the state. Despite the fact that the plant uses thirty percent less energy compared to other plants, it is the highest polluting power plant in the state; producing 1.85 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year.

Does water use vary by more than 50% seasonally in parts of your region?

- The Inland Empire climate varies greatly from summer to winter, and therefore water demand varies accordingly. There is a greater demand for irrigation needs during the hotter season that drives up the per capita water use.

Are crops in your region climate sensitive? Would shifts in daily heat patterns, such as how long heat lingers before night-time cooling, be prohibitive for some crops?

- Citrus trees are not tolerable of below freezing temperatures. Colder winters with freezing nights have the potential to cause significant damage to citrus crops. In response to higher temperatures, evapotranspiration rates of the plants may increase, requiring more water to be used on warmer days

Do groundwater supplies in your region lack resiliency after drought events?

- Typically groundwater supplies do not lack resiliency because groundwater is replenished and stored in wet years.

Are water use curtailment measures effective in your region?

- Conservation efforts in the area include The Water Conservation Education Program, Weather Based Irrigation Controllers Program, "climate appropriate" plant promotion with Home Depot stores and other stores and nurseries, and the water conservation demonstration garden at California State University San Bernardino. These programs have begun to address the conservation needs of the area without implementing direct curtailment measures. Commercial, industrial, and institutional water reduction plans are also in place.

Are some in stream flow requirements in your region either currently insufficient to support aquatic life, or occasionally unmet?

- The in stream flows are sufficient to support aquatic life because natural flows are augmented by Publically Owned Treatment Works flows that are highly treated.

Water Supply:

Does a portion of the water supply in your region come from snowmelt?

- The water supply in the region does not come from snowmelt.

Does part of your region rely on water diverted from the Delta, imported from the Colorado River or imported from other climate-sensitive systems outside of your region?

- State Water Project water has been made available to East Valley. The water for the region is currently 57% ground water, 24% State Water Project water, 17% surface water, and 2% recycled water. The region does not rely on any water imported from the Colorado River.

Does part of your region rely of coastal aquifers? Has salt intrusion been a problem in the past?

- The region does not rely on coastal aquifers, but salt intrusion could affect the function of the State Water Project, which could ultimately have an impact on water supplies.

Would your region have difficulty in storing carryover supply surpluses from year to year?

- The region would only have issues storing surplus water in times when the basins are already saturated.

Has your region faced a drought in the past during which it failed to meet local water demands?

- The region has not faced a drought in which it was unable to meet local water demands.

Does your region have invasive species management issues at your facilities, along conveyance structures, or in habitat areas?

- The region has two invasive species, the Giant Reed and the Tamarisk Annual Grass. The Giant Reed was introduced in California in the 1820's in an attempt to help control erosion, but has since become an invasive plant. It has increased the fire fuel by 30% in the Santa Ana Basin area and also has the potential to cause major issues during floods. In addition to these issues, the Giant Reed uses 56,200 acre-ft per year in the Santa Ana River, decreasing the amount of water available to the population. Tamarisk was introduced as an ornamental planet, but has become invasive as it absorbs a large amount of water and creates salt deposits. Its seeds are dispersed by wind, have no dormancy requirements, and have a 24 hour germination period, allowing it to spread quickly and easily.

Water Quality:

Are increased wildfires a threat in your region? If so, does your region include reservoirs with fire-susceptible vegetation nearby which could pose a water quality concern from increased erosion?

- Wildfires are a threat in the region, especially during dry summers.

Does part of your region rely on surface water bodies with current or recurrent water quality issues related to eutrophication, such as low dissolved oxygen or algal blooms? Are there other water quality constituents potentially exacerbated by climate change?

- Big Bear Lake has had issues with high nitrogen and nutrient levels that promote algal growth. Although the lake is no longer a main water supply source, its contaminant levels affect recreational activity. The Middle Santa Anna River Watershed has been found to have issues with pathogens and high coliform count.

Are seasonal low flows decreasing for some water bodies in your region? If so, are the reduced flows limiting the water bodies' assimilative capacity?

- Flow levels for the water bodies in the region have been consistent with weather conditions.

Are there beneficial uses designated for some water bodies in your region that cannot always be met due to water quality issues?

- Big Bear Lake is a popular recreational area for swimming, boating and fishing in the San Bernardino Mountains. It was originally created by Bear Valley Mutual Water Company to serve as a storage reservoir in order to provide agricultural water to the customers downstream. Big Bear Lake faces many water quality issues that have the potential to affect its recreational uses. In 1990 Big Bear Lake was added to California’s list of impaired water bodies by the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board. A Total Maximum Daily Load was implemented in 2007 in order to protect the lake’s beneficial uses. Various water bodies in the Middle Santa Ana River Watershed were also added to the list of impaired water bodies in 1994 because the fecal coliform objective was exceeded, ultimately affecting the water contact recreation of the area. The table below lists the pollutants affecting the Big Bear Lake Watershed and the Middle Santa Ana Watershed.

Table 7: Pollutants Effecting Water bodies

Santa Ana Region Pollutants	
Water Body	Pollutants
Big Bear Lake Watershed	
Big Bear Lake	Metals, Noxious aquatic plants and Nutrients, Sedimentation/Siltation, and Mercury
Grout Creek	Metals and Nutrients
Knickerbocker Creek	Metals and Pathogens
Rathbone Creek	Nutrients and Sedimentation/Siltation
Summit Creek	Nutrients
Middle Santa Ana River Watershed	
Chino Creek, Reach 1	Pathogens
Chino Creek, Reach 2	High Coliform Count
Cucamonga Creek, Valley Ranch	High Coliform Count
Mill Creek (Prado Area)	Pathogens
Santa Ana River, Reach 3	Pathogens and Nitrate
Prado Park Lake	Pathogens

Does part of your region currently observe water quality shifts during rain events that impact treatment facility operation?

- The region does not observe water quality shifts during rain events that impact water treatment facility operations.

Sea Level Rise:

Has coastal erosion already been observed in your region?

- Coastal erosion has not been observed in the region.

Are there coastal structures, such as levees or breakwaters, in your region?

- There are no coastal structures in the region.

Is there significant coastal infrastructure, such as residences, recreation, water and wastewater treatment, tourism, and transportation at less than six feet above mean sea level in your region?

- There is no infrastructure less than six feet above mean sea level.

Are there climate-sensitive low-lying coastal habitats in your region?

- There are no climate-sensitive low-lying coastal habitats in the region.

Are there areas in your region that currently flood during extreme high tides or storm surges?

- There are no areas in the region that flood during extreme high tides or storm surges do to coastal waters.

Is there land subsidence in the coastal area of your region?

- There is no land subsidence in the coastal area of the region.

Do tidal gauges along the coastal parts of your region show an increase over the past several decades?

- There are no coastal parts in the region.

Flooding:

Does critical infrastructure in your region lie within the 200-year floodplain?

- The 200-year floodplain is not available at this time, but infrastructure such as Crafton Elementary School lies in the 100 year floodplain provided by FEMA for The Zanja as well as many buildings along the Santa Ana.

Does part of your region lie within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Drainage District?

- The region does not lie within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Drainage District.

Does aging critical flood protection infrastructure exist in your region?

- Flood protection in the area has been in place for several decades, but improvements have been made in the last decade. The federal Santa Ana River Mainstream project includes the Seven Oaks Dam, Prado Dam, and other flood control facilities along the Santa Ana River, which provide flood protection to the residents of San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange Counties. The Seven Oaks Dam was completed in 1999 and the construction of the SAR project began in 1989.

Have flood control facilities (such as impoundment structures) been insufficient in the past?

- Flood control facilities have failed as recently as December 2010, when several creeks and debris basins overflowed and flooded the City of Highland.

Are wildfires a concern in parts of your region?

- Wildfires have always been a concern for the region. An example would be the Old Fire in 2003, which burned 91,281 acres, destroyed 993 homes, and killed 6 people. During this incident The East Valley Water District advised residents in certain areas to boil water for drinking and eating in order to ensure that the water was safe to drink.

Ecosystem and Habitat Vulnerability:

Does your region include inland or coastal aquatic habitats vulnerable to erosion and sedimentation issues?

- The region does not include inland or coastal aquatic habitats vulnerable to erosion.

Does your region include estuarine habitats which rely on seasonal freshwater flow patterns?

- The region does not include estuarine habitats.

Do climate-sensitive fauna or flora populations live in your region?

- Climate sensitive plants live in the region.

Do endangered or threatened species exist in your region? Are changes in species distribution already being observed in parts of your region?

- Endangered species live in the region.

Does the region rely on aquatic or water-dependent habitats for recreation or other economic activities?

- The region does rely on aquatic habitats for recreational purposes, as is the case for Big Bear Lake and Middle Santa Ana.

Are there rivers in your region with quantified environmental flow requirements or known water quality/quantity stressors to aquatic life?

- There are rivers in the region with water quality stressors such as Middle Santa Ana.

Do estuaries, coastal dunes, wetlands, marshes, or exposed beaches exist in your region? If so, are coastal storms possible/frequent in your region?

- Exposed coastal areas do not exist in the region.

Does your region include one or more of the habitats described in the Endangered Species Coalition's Top 10 habitats vulnerable to climate change?

- The region does not include any of the habitats described in the Endangered Species Coalition's Top 10 habitats vulnerable to climate change.

Are there areas of fragmented estuarine, aquatic, or wetland wildlife habitat within your region? Are there movement corridors for species to naturally migrate? Are there infrastructure projects planned that might preclude species movement?

- The region is not aware of fragmented wildlife habitat within the region, or infrastructure projects planned that might preclude species movement.

Hydropower:

Is hydropower a source of electricity in your region?

- The hydropower stations located in the area include the Santa Ana No 1 & 2, Mill Creek No 2 & 3, San Geronio, and Lytle Creek. These stations are owned and operated by the Southern California Edison Company and produce 12.63 MW of electricity. Below lists the generating capacity of each location.

Hydropower Station Capacity	
Hydropower Station	Generating Capacity (MW)
Santa Ana No 1 & 2	6.3
Mill Creek No 1 & 2	3.23
San Gorgonio	2.63
Lytle Creek	0.45
Devil Canyon	276.46
Fontana Sandhill WTP Hydropower Facility	0.31

Are energy needs in your region expected to increase in the future? If so, are there future plans for hydropower generating facilities or conditions for hydropower generation in your region?

- There are currently no future plans for more hydropower generation facilities in the region.

The above checklist demonstrates the areas for which the region is most vulnerable.