What is MAC?

MAC is an acronym for Mokelumne-Amador-Calaveras. The term was coined to describe the MAC region, one of more than fifty IRWM regions established in California under the state's IRWM program. The MAC region incorporates all of Amador County and sizeable portions of Calaveras and Alpine Counties. Included within the region's boundary are cities, water and irrigation districts, watershed management areas, portions of groundwater basins, disadvantaged communities, and large tracts of federally-owned lands. Figure 1 shows the MAC IRWM region.
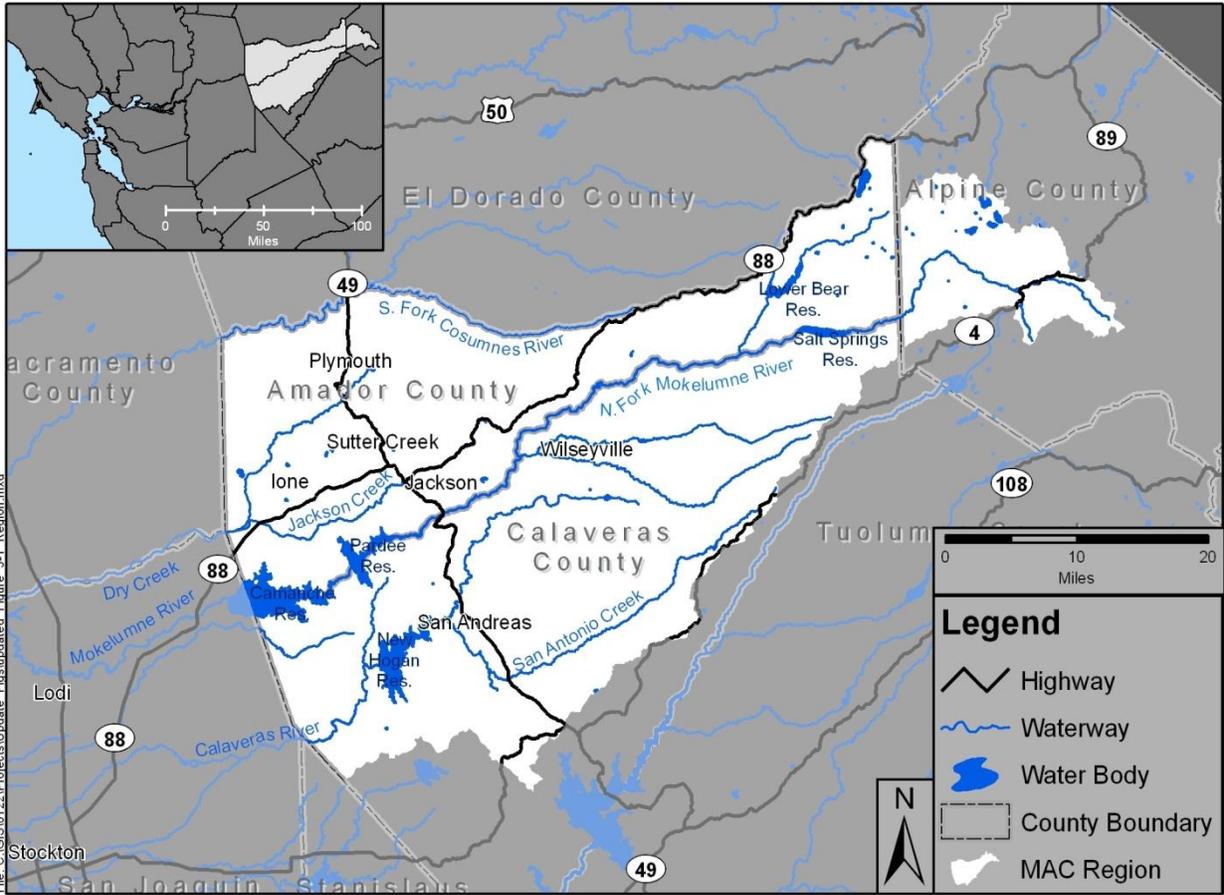
The MAC region contains approximately 1.25 million acres (about 1,950 square miles) and is located in the Sierra Nevada foothills, approximately 45 miles southeast of Sacramento. Situated in a transitional zone between the San Joaquin Valley and the Sierra Nevada, the region stretches across varied topography and microclimates. Warm, dry summers and mild winters are predominant in the western foothills. Mild summers and cold winters characterize the mountainous eastern region with temperatures ranging. Hot, dry summers and mild winters prevail in the western portion of the region with summer day time highs in excess of 100 degrees.

The MAC IRWM region is home to approximately 130,000 people. About 80% of the population lives in urban areas, although 98% of the region is considered rural. The overall population density is 2000 people per square mile (the average for the entire region), with rural areas having a population density of about 40 people per square mile.

The primary sources of water in the region are the Mokelumne and Calaveras River watersheds (and to a lesser extent, the Cosumnes River watershed), with snowmelt and rainfall from the Sierra Mountain Range transported via the rivers and their tributaries. Although the region is famous for its historic gold mining and recreation, current land uses also include cattle ranching, orchards, timber, vineyards and row crops, and mining (industrial minerals, limestone, sand and gravel).

Development in the MAC Region, both urban and rural, is clustered around the major cities and highways. Agriculture, grazing, and open spaces dominate land uses and represent a relatively large portion of the total region land use. Other industries outside the urban setting include mining and timber harvesting where the majority of the land cover is forest, shrub and grassland. General land use trends in the region include significant development of rural and agricultural areas associated with population increases in Plymouth and Sutter Creek (Amador County), Kirkwood and Bear Valley (Alpine County), and the Rancho Calaveras and La Contenta areas (Calaveras County). A second land use trend is a shift from grazing to viticulture and viticulture to residential development.

FIGURE 1:

50

89

El Dorado County

Alpine County

49

88

Lower Bear Res.

4

S. Fork Cosumnes River

Salt Springs Res.

Plymouth

Sacramento County

Amador County

N. Fork Mokelumne River

108

Sutter Creek

Wilseyville

Ione

Jackson

Jackson Creek

Calaveras County

Tuolum

Dry Creek

88

Pardee Res.

Camanche Res.

Mokelumne River

San Andreas

San Antonio Creek

New Hogan Res.

Lodi

88

Calaveras River

Stockton

San Joaquin   Stanislaus

49

Miles

0   50   100

0   10   20

Miles

N

Legend

⋀ Highway

〜 Waterway

🖝 Water Body

⬚ County Boundary

▢ MAC Region

MAC IRWMP Region