

10 Strategies

The Council seeks to use the following strategies to accomplish its mission.

1. Collaborate on the development of a comprehensive, integrated watershed management plan to guide priorities and implementation strategies.
2. Facilitate communication between public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders.
3. Provide a forum for collecting, sharing, and analyzing information about, and creatively responding to, watershed issues.
4. Refine understanding—among Council members, decision-makers, and the general public—of the watershed’s conditions, processes, interrelationships, and challenges from a variety of perspectives, including scientific, cultural, economic, regulatory, and more.
5. Identify opportunities for Council members to leverage resources and work together toward common goals.
6. Serve as a subcommittee of the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County and a contributor to the County’s Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.
7. Promote the priorities and projects of the watershed management plan to local, state, and federal officials.
8. Seek funding and other support to implement priority watershed management projects.
9. Monitor the effectiveness of, and regularly update, the watershed management plan.
10. Facilitate coordination of watershed education activities.

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Our Watershed *By the Numbers*

100 Percent of our water comes from our own watershed

2 Reservoirs
4 Groundwater basins

14.7 Inches of average annual rainfall in Ventura
21.3 Inches of average annual rainfall in Ojai
34.3 Inches of average annual rainfall at Matilija Reservoir

4,500 Feet of elevation gain in only four miles, from Ojai to Nordhoff Ridge (=more rain that flows FAST)

5 Presidentially declared flood disasters since 1992

32 Miles of river from the headwaters to the coast

1 Public wastewater treatment plant

13 Water quality impairments listed by the state

7,550 Surface water & groundwater quality tests performed annually

85 Percent reduction in nitrogen (total N) pollution in the river since the 1970s

33 People on average attend Watershed Council meetings

1 Watershed Council employee

42,500 People live in our watershed

121 Special status plant & animal species depend upon our watershed

4,214,400 Dollars in grant funding awarded since 2008 for our watershed because of collaborative efforts

226 Square miles in our watershed

51 Percent (116 sq. mi.) of our watershed within National Forest

6,001 Acres (9.4 sq. mi. or 4.2 percent) of irrigated agriculture

3.2 Percent (7.2 sq. mi. or 4,608 acres) of our watershed is within cities

1,964 Acres (3.1 sq. mi.) of our watershed protected forever by local land conservancies and their supporters

6,025 Feet marks the highest elevation



The mission of the Ventura River Watershed Council is to facilitate and support efforts by individuals, agencies and organizations to maintain and improve the health and sustainability of the Ventura River watershed for the benefit of the people and ecosystems that depend upon it.



www.venturawatershed.org

Ventura River Watershed Council

Ten times a year, a diverse group of people meets to discuss issues related to the Ventura River watershed. We talk about water quality, floods, farms, fish, droughts, threats, new regulations and more. We share information, listen to presentations, pursue grant funding, get to know one another, try to understand different points of view, and work on collaborative solutions to watershed problems.

The Ventura River Watershed Council is a public forum, open to anyone. We have active participation by water and sanitation districts, government agencies, environmental groups, agricultural organizations, businesses, landowners, consultants and private citizens. The Council is non-regulatory and governed by a simple charter. We are supported by one staff person whose position is hosted by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy and funded by grants and locally matching dollars.

History

May, 2006

Ventura River Watershed Council formed. The California Coastal Conservancy's Wetland Recovery Project launched the Council. Shortly thereafter leadership transferred to the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County. A big part of the Council's early work was helping to develop a regional, integrated water management plan for Ventura County. These plans are a prerequisite for receiving water bond funding under Proposition 50 (2002) and Proposition 84 (2006).

January, 2008

\$3,349,000 in Proposition 50 funding awarded for three projects: 1) a Ventura River Watershed Protection Project (largely surface water hydrology modeling to inform flood control), 2) the San Antonio Creek Spreading Grounds (groundwater recharge), and 3) Senior Canyon Mutual Water Company Equipment Upgrades (to reduce water demand).

April, 2010

“Watershed U – Ventura River” was held, a comprehensive educational series for the community. Coordinated by the University of California's Cooperative Extension's office and supported by Watershed Council participants. This popular program provided 18 hours of educational presentations by local experts on a wide variety of watershed topics.

January, 2011

\$500,000 in Proposition 84 funding awarded for the Ojai Meadows Ecosystem Restoration Project.

February, 2011

\$75,000 in Proposition 84 funding awarded for a Biodigester Feasibility Study as a potential manure management option.

September, 2011

Watershed coordinator hired. The new watershed coordinator position is funded by a grant (\$241,600) from the California Department of Conservation, with additional support provided by several Watershed Council partners. Development of a Ventura River

Watershed Management Plan is a key objective of the watershed coordinator position. The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy generously hosts the staff position.

January, 2012

Organizational identity strengthened. Developed a mission statement, logo and website for the Council. (www.venturawatershed.org)

April, 2012

Evening meetings. The first evening meeting of the Council was held to accommodate the schedules of those who cannot attend daytime meetings. Evening meetings are held twice a year, in April and October.

May, 2012

Governance Charter adopted. A basic governance charter was adopted, which outlines the organization's purpose, objectives, membership and decision-making structure. The charter makes explicit the stakeholders' commitment to the work of the Watershed Council and helps give credibility to the Council's work.

July, 2012

Ventura River Parkway concept approved by Board of Supervisors. Watershed Council partners, including the Calif. Coastal Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Friends of the Ventura River, Surfrider Foundation, and Ventura Hillside Conservancy, worked with Supervisor Steve Bennett to gain conceptual support from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors for a Ventura River Parkway. The idea of a parkway is to provide more public access, trails and recreational opportunities along the river to make the river a more visible and valued community asset.

October, 2012

\$48,800 grant awarded from the Bureau of Reclamation to expand the Watershed Council and help with the development of a watershed management plan.

Participants

In addition to citizens, landowners, businesses and consultants, the following organizations regularly participate in the Council:

California Coastal Conservancy
California Conservation Corps
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Casitas Municipal Water District
City of Ojai
City of Ventura
Farm Bureau of Ventura County
Friends of the Ventura River
Meiners Oaks Water District
Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency
Ojai Valley Green Coalition
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
Ojai Valley Sanitary District
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
Surfrider Foundation
University of California Cooperative Extension
University of California Santa Barbara
Ventura Citizens for Hillside Preservation
Ventura County Agricultural Irrigated Lands Group
Ventura County Coalition of Labor, Ag., and Business
Ventura County Resource Conservation District
Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett's Office
Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Ventura Hillside Conservancy
Ventura River County Water District
Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County

Leadership Committee

In order to ensure that the Council fairly represents the different stakeholders in the watershed, and that a balance of perspectives and interests are represented in its decisions, the Council established a “Leadership Committee” consisting of at least 17 members representing the following five categories of stakeholders: government, water and sanitary, land management/recreation, nonprofit and business/landowner.

(Funded by a grant from the Calif. Department of Conservation.)

Get Involved!

We encourage your participation! Get on our **email list** to follow along with the latest activities of the Council. Send an email to info@venturawatershed.org and say “Add my name to your email list.”

Come to our **meetings**. All are welcome and you can engage in the discussion as much or as little as you like. See our website, www.venturawatershed.org, for monthly meeting dates and other useful information.

Become a **volunteer**. Help is needed with research, writing, meeting coordination, design, the website and more. Call us at 805/649-6852 x4 for more information.

