



Currently, there is no formal Groundwater Management Plan (GWMP) for the Upper Ventura River Subbasin of the Ventura River Valley Groundwater Basin (Upper Basin). Recognizing the need for improved groundwater management, seven entities along the Ventura River have formed the Groundwater Subcommittee of the Ventura River Watershed Council. This group has identified the following “next steps” to improve groundwater management:

- a. Outreach to groundwater pumpers
- b. Preparation of a surface water/groundwater interaction study (this application)
- c. Development of a groundwater model of the Ventura River mainstem basins
- d. Preparation of a groundwater management strategy
- e. Preparation of a GWMP

The proposed project addresses step “b” above, preparation of a surface water/groundwater interaction study. The proposed Upper Ventura River Basin Surface Water/Groundwater Interaction Study (Interaction Study) is a key component necessary for advancement of a GWMP for the Upper Basin.

History of Collaboration

The Ventura River Watershed has a history of extensive efforts to enhance sustainable management of the water and ecological resources throughout the watershed. These efforts have included broad involvement from local public and private agencies, public stakeholders and others.

Studies related to Ventura River surface water and groundwater go back to the 1930’s. Recent published works demonstrating the coordinated efforts that have taken, and continue to take place within the Ventura River watershed, include, but are not limited to the following:

- *Ventura River Watershed Hydrology Model, 2008 and 2009*: Ventura County Watershed Protection District developed a hydrologic model for the Ventura River watershed for baseline and natural condition scenarios. The model will

support various water availability and storm flow analyses and provide a platform for future evaluations of water supply and quality within the Ventura River watershed;

- *Groundwater Budget Approach to a Groundwater Management Plan, Upper and Lower Ventura River Basin, 2010*: prepared for the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, this document constitutes first steps in establishing sufficient understanding of the Ventura River groundwater resources and planning elements needed for long-term protection and management of the Ventura River Valley groundwater basin;
- *Ventura River Watershed Protection Plan Report, 2012*: Prepared for the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, this report summarizes existing information and reports, focused on water supply and water resources. The report places emphasis on priority projects from the Watershed Coalition of Ventura County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan; and
- *Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan, 2012*: released by the National Marine Fisheries Service, this document outlines goals and actions for promoting recovery of Southern California Steelhead populations, with specific actions to improve the health of the Ventura River and groundwater systems.

In addition to the numerous studies that have been conducted, collaboration in the watershed includes the formation of several organizations, which provide venues for cooperative discussion and actions to address critical watershed issues.

At the forefront of these groups, is the Ventura River Watershed Council (Watershed Council), a coalition of stakeholders from government agencies, including the City of Ventura, water and sanitation districts, environmental and educational non-profits, agricultural organizations, community volunteer groups, as well as engineers, biologists, businesses and private citizens who engage in watershed planning efforts in the Ventura River Watershed. Meetings are held eight times a year and are



open to the public. Recently, this group hired a watershed coordinator to write a watershed management plan.

Groundwater Management

Currently, there is no formal GWMP for the Upper Basin; however guidance policies are in place and efforts to improve groundwater management are ongoing.

The primary framework for groundwater management along the Ventura River is provided by the Ventura County Well Ordinance No. 4184, Division 4, Chapter 8, Article 1, Section 4826 – Aquifer Protection Program. This ordinance is intended to prevent groundwater impairment by requiring well owners to submit annual reports that specify volumes of groundwater extracted and well operation duration. In addition, the Groundwater Conservation Program, section 4813 of the Ventura County Well Ordinance, stipulates that “the construction, maintenance, operation, use, repair, modification, and destruction of wells in such a manner that the groundwater of the County will not be contaminated or polluted, and that water obtained from wells will be suitable for beneficial use and will not jeopardize the health, safety or welfare of the people of this County.”

Identified Need for Improved Groundwater Management

Unlike most watersheds in southern California, **no imported water** is delivered within the Ventura River watershed. Residents are solely dependent on local supplies. Lake Casitas, which is fed by Ventura River water, is a major source of supply, as is groundwater.

A large portion of the Ventura River has been listed by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board as impaired due to water diversions and pumping¹. The Ventura River Basin is a relatively small groundwater basin subject to frequent filling and dewatering, likened to a series of tea cups. Groundwater recharge occurs primarily by percolation of flow in the Ventura River and, percolation of rainfall on the valley floor and percolation of excess

¹ State Water Resources Control Board. 2010. Final 2010 Integrated Report. Available at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml. Accessed: June 1, 2012.

irrigation water². Precipitation varies throughout the watershed and is typically concentrated into a few months out of the year (November to March). Large portions of the river have no significant surface flow for the majority of the year. Stakeholders recognize that, given the variability of the surface water supply and their limited water sources, it is necessary to develop strategies to jointly manage the groundwater and surface water of the watershed.

Further, recovery of the Southern steelhead has been linked to changes in management of the Ventura River and groundwater systems. In January 2012, the National Marine Fisheries Service published the Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan (SCS Recovery Plan), which provides a framework for improving management of steelhead populations in the Ventura River and thereby, sustainably managing the associated river and groundwater systems. The SCS Recovery Plan indicates that there is a need for a better scientific understanding of the surface water and groundwater interactions to effectively manage the Ventura River and groundwater basin in support of steelhead recovery. Critical Recovery Actions outlined in the SCS Recovery Plan serve as important guidelines for improved groundwater management and include:

- Conduct groundwater extraction analysis and assessment
- Develop and implement groundwater monitoring and management program
- Develop and implement a water management plan for diversion operations

Development of a Groundwater Management Plan

The Groundwater Subcommittee of the Ventura River Watershed Council was formed in 2010 and consists of seven entities: the City of Ventura, Ventura River County Water District, Meiners Oaks Water District, Ventura County Watershed Protection District, Casitas Municipal Water District, Ojai Valley Sanitary District, and Ojai Valley Land Conservancy. These agencies

² California Department of Water Resources, 2004. Bulletin 118 – Ventura River Valley Groundwater Basin, Upper Ventura River Subbasin.

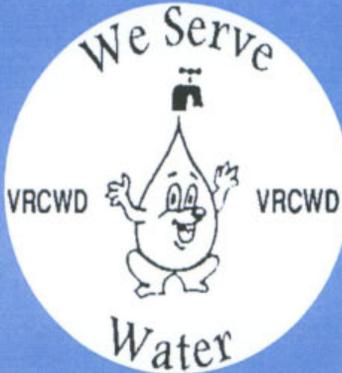


Ventura Water Local Groundwater Assistance Grant
ATTACHMENT 3. STATUS OF GWMP

are focused on improving groundwater management in the Ventura River. The Subcommittee has already solicited input from local groundwater pumpers (see outreach letter provided at the end of this attachment) to enhance collaboration and more effectively manage groundwater resources. The Subcommittee also entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) (also provided with this attachment) directing the preparation of the Interaction Study. The MOA establishes obligations of various parties to participate and support efforts to obtain grant funding for groundwater studies. It also establishes obligations by certain entities to provide reasonable access to lands for monitoring purposes related to the study.

The framework is in place to establish effective groundwater management within the Upper Basin. The history of collaboration on the Ventura River is strongly indicative of the capacity to develop a groundwater management plan. The proposed **Upper Ventura River Basin Surface Water/Groundwater Interaction Study** constitutes an essential step toward the development of a GWMP that will facilitate the long-term sustainability of the Upper Basin's groundwater resources.

June 18, 2012



**VENTURA
RIVER**
COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

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Ojai, CA 93023
Phone (805)646-3403
Fax (805) 646-3860
www.vrcwd.com

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Marvin Hanson – Vice President
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OFFICE MANAGER

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Joe Zuniga

ATTORNEY

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Water Pumpers near the Ventura River

**SUBJECT: POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO PUMPING IN THE VENTURA RIVER
WATERSHED – INVITATION TO WORK TOGETHER**

As water pumpers in the Ventura River Watershed we are concerned that we continue to responsibly manage the water resources in the upper Ventura River Basin. Due to the lack of solid data that documents the relationship between groundwater pumping and surface flows in the Ventura River, **it is presumed by some that pumping operations are one of the prime causes of reductions to surface flows needed by the endangered Southern California Steelhead.** This letter is your invitation to participate in an effort to study the relationship between groundwater pumping and river surface flows.

Ventura Water, Ventura River County Water District and Meiners Oaks Water District are working together to apply for a \$250,000 Local Groundwater Assistance Grant to gather practical data on the interaction of surface water and groundwater from Casitas Vistas Road to North Fork Matilija. If we obtain this State funded grant it will provide for data collection for one or possibly two seasons (spring – fall). We may need to gather data over 5 to 7 years to capture a range of wet to dry scenarios. The collected data will be analyzed to evaluate the interactions between groundwater pumping and river surface flows in the river.

There are no matching monies required for the grant, but it will cost about \$25,000 to hire a consultant to prepare the grant materials. It may be very helpful to you in the future to have your well included in this and future studies so your impact or lack of impact on surface flows is documented. If you want to participate or stay informed on this effort, please contact Bert Rapp, Ventura River County Water District at (805) 646-3403 or Bert@VRCWD.com or one of the following persons:

Karen Waln, Ventura Water (805) 677-4128

Mike Hollebrands, Meiners Oaks Water District (805) 646-2114

Very Truly Yours

VENTURA RIVER COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

Bert J. Rapp, P.E., General Manager

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
CONCERNING EQUAL COST SHARING TO FUND AND IMPLEMENT A
GROUNDWATER/ SURFACE WATER INTERACTION STUDY
IN THE VENTURA RIVER WATERSHED**

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is intended to create a binding contract among the following entities: City of San Buenaventura, Ventura River County Water District, and Meiners Oaks Water District (collectively referred to as the "Funding Parties" and individually the "Funding Party"); and Ventura County Watershed Protection District, Casitas Municipal Water District, Ojai Valley Sanitary District and Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (collectively referred to as the "Non-Funding Parties").

WHEREAS, the California Department of Water Resources offer a Local Groundwater Assistance Grant Program (LGAP) which provides local public agencies with up to \$250,000 to conduct groundwater studies or carry out groundwater monitoring and management activities; and

WHEREAS, it would be mutually beneficial to the Parties to participate in the preparation of a LGAP grant application to conduct groundwater/surface water interaction studies in the Ventura River Watershed; and

WHEREAS, if grant monies are awarded, the Parties will provide oversight of groundwater/surface water interaction studies to help better understand the impacts of groundwater pumping and surface flows in the Ventura River.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Funding and Non-Funding Parties hereto agree as follows:

Obligations of Funding Parties:

1. The Funding Parties shall establish a Management Committee to steer the preparation of the LGAP grant and implementation of the groundwater/surface water interaction studies if funded. The Management committee shall be comprised of one (1) member from each of the Funding Parties.
2. City of San Buenaventura (Ventura Water), as lead agency, shall Chair the Management Committee and shall be responsible for the procurement of consultant services to prepare the LGAP grant and subsequent grant opportunities. As Chair, Ventura shall make a reasonable effort to include all agencies in decision making.

3. The Funding Parties shall contribute funds to Ventura Water for the preparation of the LGAP grant in an equal amount based on the number of Funding Parties, e.g., each Funding Party shall contribute one-third of the cost of preparation.

4. The total cost of preparation of the LGAP grant shall not exceed \$25,000 plus 10% contingency or \$27,500, and each Funding Party's share shall be equal based on the \$27,500 figure or the final actual cost of LGAP grant preparation, whichever is lower.

5. If any of the Funding Parties do not sign this Agreement, City of San Buenaventura will advance the difference and redistribute the short fall equally among the Funding Parties.

6. If awarded, the City of San Buenaventura will administer the grant and retain 10% of the grant monies to cover associated expenses for administration.

Obligation of Non-Funding Parties:

7. The Non-Funding Parties are not liable for any costs incurred by the other participants of the MOA. The Non-Funding Parties will share existing data that they possess or develop as final public record in the existing form and format. The Non-Funding parties may, at their sole discretion, provide technical assistance and review of the study product.

8. The Non-Funding Parties will support the Funding Parties efforts to obtain grant funding for the Upper Ventura River Basin Surface Water/Groundwater Interaction Study.

9. The Non-Funding Parties will permit mutually reasonable access to their lands, without charge, by personnel that are authorized by the Non-Funding Party for the sole purpose of monitoring surface water/groundwater interactions. The Non-Funding Party may at its sole discretion limit, restrict, suspend or terminate the access permit at any time. Any access shall not interfere with the operations and maintenance activities of the Non-Funding Party. Access permission shall not be interpreted as permitting an encroachment for any land use and/or installation of facilities and/or a conveyance of any interest in real property.

General Terms and Conditions

10. **Term.** This MOA will commence June 1, 2012 and end July 1, 2015. The Funding and Non-Funding Parties may extend the termination date by written mutual consent.

11. **Withdrawal.** Any Funding or Non-Funding Party may withdraw from this MOA by providing thirty days written notice to the other Parties. All payments made by the withdrawing Funding Party shall be maintained by the lead agency.

12. **Independent Contractor Status.** This MOA is among the Funding and Non-Funding Parties and is not intended and shall not be construed so as to create the relationship of agent servant, employee, partnership, joint venture or association. The Parties are independent public entities who have entered in this MOA freely and voluntarily and neither represents the other in any capacity whatsoever.

13. **Amendments.** It is mutually understood and agreed that no addition to, alteration of, or variation of the terms of this MOA, nor any oral understanding or agreement not incorporated herein, shall be valid unless made in writing and signed and approved by all Funding and Non-Funding Parties.

14. **Entire Agreement.** This MOA is incorporated herein by reference constitute the entire understanding between the Funding and Non-Funding Parties and supersedes any prior oral or written understands or agreements of the Funding and Non-Funding Parties. This MOA shall not be amended nor any breach thereof waived, except in writing signed by the Funding and Non-Funding Parties.

15. **Governing Law.** This MOA shall be governed by the laws of the State of California. If any provision in this MOA is held by a court of competence jurisdiction to be invalid, void, or unenforceable, the remaining provisions nonetheless shall continue in full force and effect.

16. **Integration.** This MOA is intended to be the Funding and Non-Funding Parties final expression and supersedes all prior oral and written understandings pertaining to the subject matter hereof.

17. **Counterparts.** This MOA may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be an original, but all of which taken together shall constitute but one and the same instrument, provided, however, that such counterparts shall have been delivered to all Funding and Non-Funding Parties to this MOA.

18. **Representation of Authority.** By the Funding and Non-Funding Parties signature which follows, each Funding and Non-Funding Party hereby represents that it has the authority to bind the Party to the terms and conditions of this MOA and agrees to support completion of the implementation of the Upper Ventura River Basin Surface Water/Groundwater Interaction Study. The Funding and Non-Funding Parties to this MOA represent and warrant that this MOA has been duly authorized and executed and constitutes the legally binding obligation of their respective organization or entity, enforceable in accordance with its terms.

In Witness Whereof, the Parties have executed this MOA on the date opposite their respective names.

CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

By: Mike Tracy

Dated: 7/9/12

Title: Mike Tracy
Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM

By: [Signature]
Ariel Pierre Calonne
City Attorney

ATTEST:

[Signature]
for Cynthia M. Rodriguz, CMC
City Clerk

VENTURA RIVER COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

MEINERS OAKS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

VENTURA COUNTY WATERSHED PROTECTION DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM

ATTEST:

Cynthia M. Rodgriguz, CMC
City Clerk

By: _____
Ariel Pierre Calonne
City Attorney

VENTURA RIVER COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By: Marvin L. Hanson

Dated: 6/25/12

Title: VICE PRESIDENT

MEINERS OAKS ^{MEM} COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By: [Signature]

Dated: 6/28/12

Title: General Manager

VENTURA COUNTY WATERSHED PROTECTION DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM

ATTEST:

By: _____

Ariel Pierre Calonne
City Attorney

Cynthia M. Rodgriguz, CMC
City Clerk

VENTURA RIVER COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

MEINERS OAKS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

VENTURA COUNTY WATERSHED PROTECTION DISTRICT

By: *Jill Flanagan*

Dated: *June 25, 2012*

Title: *Deputy Director*

CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM

ATTEST:

Cynthia M. Rodriguz, CMC
City Clerk

By: _____

Ariel Pierre Calonne
City Attorney

VENTURA RIVER COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

MEINERS OAKS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

VENTURA COUNTY WATERSHED PROTECTION DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

By: Russ Baggerly

Dated: 6-26-12

Title: Russ Baggerly, President
Board of Directors

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

By: Russ Baggerly
Russ Baggerly, Chairman
Title: Board of Directors

Dated: 6-26-12

OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

By: _____

Dated: _____

Title: _____

OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

By: *[Signature]*

Dated: 6/28/12

Title: Executive Director