

# Ventura River Watershed Council Leadership Committee: Profiles



The Leadership Committee of the Ventura River Watershed Council represents the Council's voting members. The Leadership Committee, which has 21 members, was established to ensure that a balance of perspectives and interests are represented in the Council's decisions. Leadership Committee membership is reviewed annually. There are five categories of members: government, water and sanitary, land management / recreation, environmental, and business/landowner.

Profiles of the current members of the Leadership Committee are provided below, organized by category.

(Some of the background information on the water agency members was taken directly from the *Draft Ventura River Habitat Conservation Plan* produced by Entrix, Inc. and URS Corp. in 2004.)

## GOVERNMENT

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### VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT 1, SUPERVISOR STEVE BENNETT

[www.ventura.org/board-of-supervisors](http://www.ventura.org/board-of-supervisors)

805/654-2703

Ventura County is one of the three local governments in the watershed. Most of the Ventura River watershed, 49%, is under the jurisdiction of Ventura County. The Ventura County Board of Supervisors is the five-member governing body that governs Ventura County. Members of the board are elected by members of their respective districts. Supervisor Steve Bennett represents the First Supervisorial District, which includes the entirety of the Ventura River watershed (except for the small piece in Santa Barbara County).

The First District includes the cities of Ojai and Ventura, and the northwestern portion of the city of Oxnard, and reaches from the coast to the Santa Barbara and Kern County lines, an area of 459,660 acres or 718.22 sq. mi. The population is approximately 165,000.

In addition to being the governing body of county government, the Board of Supervisors also governs the Ventura County Watershed Protection District. Supervisor Bennett is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency.



### VENTURA COUNTY WATERSHED PROTECTION DISTRICT

[http://portal.countyofventura.org/portal/page/portal/PUBLIC\\_WORKS/Watershed\\_Protection\\_District](http://portal.countyofventura.org/portal/page/portal/PUBLIC_WORKS/Watershed_Protection_District)

805/654-2001

The Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD), originally named the Ventura County Flood Control District, was formed by state approval of the Ventura County Flood Control Act of 1944.

The primary purposes of the VCWPD as indicated in the Act (as amended) are to: (1) provide for the control and conservation of flood and storm waters; (2) protect watercourses, watersheds, public highways, life, and property from floods; (3) prevent waste or loss of water supply; (4) import water into the district, retain and recycle storm

and flood flows, and conserve all such water for beneficial uses; and (5) provide for recreational use and beautification as part of the flood control and water conservation objectives by acquiring or constructing recreational facilities or landscaping as part of any VCWPD project.

The district is organized into five divisions to administer these broad purposes: Water and Environmental Resources; Design and Construction; Planning and Regulatory; Operations and Maintenance; and Administration. Although VCWPD is a separate legal entity from the County of Ventura, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors also serve as VCWPD's board.

The district is funded through property taxes, benefit assessments and land development fees paid by property owners within the county. The district is divided into four zones, roughly corresponding to the major watersheds within the county, and monies raised within a zone support district studies and projects in that zone. Benefit assessment monies collected from each zone are dedicated to support operations and maintenance and NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit activities within that zone. Property tax monies raised within a zone are spent on construction projects and to support district planning studies within that zone. The boundaries of the district's Zone 1 roughly follow the boundaries of the Ventura River watershed.

The list of watershed-related programs and services that the district administers/supports is far too long to enumerate here; below are some highlights:

- Lead role in the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program, a group of partners that work together to improve stormwater quality, monitor watershed health and comply with water quality requirements
- Design, construction and maintenance of levees, debris basins, channels and other drainage and flood control structures
- Lead role in monitoring and collection of precipitation, weather, and streamflows data
- Management, permitting and planning of floodplain activities
- Flood emergency planning and response
- Hydrologic modeling and forecasting
- Environmental restoration efforts, including removal of Matilija Dam & invasive species
- Lead grant applicant/administrator in support of watershed partner projects
- Groundwater well permitting, groundwater data, and basin condition assessments
- Public education on watershed issues



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## CITY OF VENTURA [VENTURA WATER]

[www.cityofventura.net/water](http://www.cityofventura.net/water)

805/667-6500

The city of Ventura is one of the three local governments in the watershed. The western part of the city (1,798 acres) lies within the watershed, including the Ventura River estuary and adjacent beaches, the Ventura Avenue area, and downtown Ventura to Oak Street.

Ventura Water is the name of the city of Ventura's department that treats and supplies water, collects and treats wastewater, supplies recycled water and collaborates with the Public Works Department to manage stormwater. This department has historically been most engaged with the Council. Ventura Water's service area encompasses the incorporated land of the city, with a population of over 109,000 people.

### **Water Supplies**

The city of Ventura obtains water supplies from five sources: Casitas MWD, Ventura River Foster Park facilities, Mound Groundwater Basin, Oxnard Plain Groundwater Basin and Santa Paula Groundwater Basin. Ventura also produces recycled water from the Ventura Wastewater Reclamation Facility.

The city of Ventura has been using water from the Ventura River watershed since its founding in 1782. The Foster Park Subsurface Diversion, built on the Ventura River in 1906, was acquired by Ventura in 1923. When the Casitas MWD was originally formed, its service area included the entire city of Ventura boundary, as it existed at that time. The city also operates shallow groundwater wells in the Foster Park area. The Ventura Avenue Treatment Plant is owned and operated by the city to treat water from the Foster Park facilities. The city has approximately 31,000 service connections; about 3,500 of these connections are within the Ventura River watershed, however water from the watershed is served to city residents outside of the watershed.

### **Wastewater Treatment**

Ventura Water provides wastewater treatment services to approximately 98% of city's residences. In the Ventura River watershed, the city's sewer lines begin at the city limits on upper Ventura Avenue, and deliver wastewater to the Ventura Water Reclamation Facility located in the Ventura harbor area near the mouth of the Santa Clara River. The facility uses a tertiary, or advanced, treatment method. In the past, most of the treated wastewater was discharged into the Santa Clara River estuary after flowing through a series of wildlife ponds for about four days, however a legal settlement will change how the city uses its reclaimed water in the future.

### **Stormwater Management**

The city of Ventura is a member of the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program, a group of partners that work together to improve stormwater quality, monitor watershed health and comply with water quality requirements. The city responds to illicit discharges to storm drains; inspects construction sites and commercial and industrial facilities to insure implementation of stormwater pollution prevention controls; reviews development plans for stormwater mitigation controls; conducts outreach to residents and school age children; and maintains the city's storm drains and flood control conduits.



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## CITY OF OJAI

[www.ci.ojai.ca.us](http://www.ci.ojai.ca.us)

805/646-5581

The city of Ojai is one of the three local governments in the watershed. The entire city, comprising 2,795 acres, is contained within the watershed.

The city's Public Works department, which addresses stormwater management and water quality issues, is engaged with the Council. The city of Ojai is a member of the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program, a group of partners that work together to improve stormwater quality, monitor watershed health and comply with water quality requirements. The city responds to illicit discharges to storm drains; inspects construction sites and commercial and industrial facilities to insure implementation of stormwater pollution prevention controls, reviews development plans for stormwater mitigation controls, conducts public outreach and maintains the city's storm drains and flood control conduits.

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## CALIFORNIA COASTAL CONSERVANCY

<http://scc.ca.gov>

510/286-4092

The California Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy), established in 1976, is a state agency that uses entrepreneurial techniques to purchase, protect, restore and enhance coastal resources, and provide access to the shore.

The Legislature created the Conservancy as a unique entity with flexible powers to serve as an intermediary among government, citizens, and the private sector in recognition that creative approaches would be needed to preserve California's coast for future generations. A seven-member board of directors, appointed by the Governor and California Legislature, governs the Conservancy.

The Conservancy:

- protects and improves the quality of coastal wetlands, streams, watersheds, and near-shore ocean waters;
- helps people get to coast and bay shores by building trails and stairways and acquiring land and easements. The Conservancy also assists in the creation of low-cost accommodations along the coast, including campgrounds and hostels;
- revitalizes urban waterfronts;
- helps to solve complex land-use problems;
- purchases and holds environmentally valuable coastal and bay lands;
- protects agricultural lands and supports coastal agriculture;
- accepts donations and dedications of land and easements for public access, wildlife habitat, agriculture, and open space.

The Conservancy administers state park and water bond funds (e.g., Propositions 50 and 84) and awards these funds in the form of grants.

Millions of dollars in grant funding have been awarded by the Conservancy for projects in the watershed. For example, the Conservancy has played a key role in funding projects related to the removal of Matilija Dam and has funded a number of land acquisitions in support of a Ventura River Parkway.



## WATER AND SANITARY

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### CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

[www.casitaswater.org](http://www.casitaswater.org)

805/649-2251

Casitas Municipal Water District (Casitas) is a special district formed in 1952 to develop and supply water for agricultural and urban uses in the Ojai Valley and Ventura areas. Casitas is the largest water supplier in the watershed, serving close to 70,000 people and hundreds of farms. Their service area encompasses 150 square miles and includes the city of Ojai, Upper Ojai, the Ventura River Valley area, the city of Ventura south to about Mills Road, and the Rincon and beach area to the ocean and Santa Barbara County line. Casitas has approximately 3,200 service connections, including 300 agricultural connections; for a number of these connections Casitas is the “back-up” supply, used only when groundwater supplies become depleted. A five-member elected board of directors governs the district.

The primary source of Casitas’ water is Lake Casitas, built by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 1959 along with Casitas Dam, Robles Diversion and Robles Canal.

Nine public and private water agencies use Casitas water, including the city of Ventura, Golden State Water Company, Ventura River County Water District, Meiners Oaks Water District, and others. All of these water agencies, except the city of Ventura, rely on water from Casitas when their groundwater supplies are depleted.

In addition to operating and maintaining the Ventura River Project, Casitas also operates and maintains a fish passage facility at the Robles Diversion and the Lake Casitas Recreation Area. Lake Casitas Recreation Area is a popular destination site with over 750,000 visitors each year. Recreational facilities at the lake include a lazy river, camping, picnicking, motor boating, sailing, canoeing and fishing. Swimming or other body-contact recreational activities are not permitted in the lake. In the past Casitas also managed releases of water from Matilija Dam, but this practice was discontinued in 2011.

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### VENTURA RIVER COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

[www.vrcwd.com](http://www.vrcwd.com)

805/646-3403

The Ventura River County Water District (VRCWD) is a special district formed in 1956 to provide water in the neighborhoods from Casitas Springs to the city of Ojai at the Vons shopping center. VRCWD’s service encompasses about 2,220 acres, and includes residential and commercial customers. VRCWD has approximately 2,100 service connections.

VRCWD obtains water from four wells located adjacent to the Ventura River and over the Upper Ventura River Groundwater Basin. Water from Casitas MWD is purchased on a continuing basis for some connections, and the district also has an agreement to purchase water from Casitas during emergencies and drought conditions.





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### MEINERS OAKS WATER DISTRICT

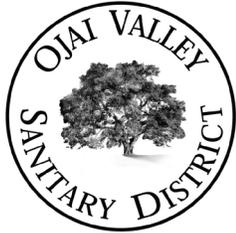
<http://meinersoakswater.com>

805/646-2114

Meiners Oaks Water District (MOWD) is a special district formed in 1949 to provide water in the Meiners Oaks community on the east side of the Ventura River. MOWD's service area encompasses approximately 1,300 acres, and includes residential, commercial and agricultural customers. MOWD has approximately 1,200 service connections.

MOWD obtains water from five wells located immediately adjacent to the Ventura River and over the Upper Ventura River Groundwater Basin. The district has an arrangement to purchase water from Casitas during emergencies and drought conditions.

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### OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

[www.ojaisan.org](http://www.ojaisan.org)

805/646-5548

The Ojai Valley Sanitary District (OVSD) was formed in 1985 to provide sewer related services to much of the urban areas of the watershed—from the city of Ojai and the Ojai Valley down to Ventura city limits. The district was created as a consolidation of the Ventura Avenue, Oak View, and Meiners Oaks Sanitary Districts and the Sanitation Department of the city of Ojai. They are governed by a seven-member board of directors.

The service area of the OVSD is approximately 5,660 acres and includes about 20,000 residents. The district maintains 120 miles of sewer mainlines, five pump stations and the treatment plant. Wastewater is collected and delivered to the OVSD Treatment Plant located five miles from the ocean, and one mile downstream from Foster Park on the east bank of the Ventura River. The treatment plant has the capacity to treat three million gallons a day.

The facility uses a tertiary, or advanced, treatment method, typically using no chemicals—just microbes, oxygen and ultraviolet light. Treated effluent is discharged into the Ventura River and provides water to the lower Ventura River and the river ecosystem. Biosolids, the byproduct of the treatment process, are composted onsite by OVSD and the compost is made available free to the public.

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### OJAI BASIN GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AGENCY

[www.obgma.com](http://www.obgma.com)

805/646-1207

The Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency (OBGMA) was created to manage the groundwater within the Ojai Groundwater Basin for the protection and common benefit of agricultural, municipal and industrial water users within the Basin.

Creation of a local groundwater management agency in California requires a special act of the state legislator. The Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency Act became law in 1991 in the fifth year of a drought, amidst concerns of local water agencies, water users and well owners about potential overdraft of the basin. The OBGMA is one of only 13 special act districts with legislative authority to manage groundwater in California (DWR 2003).

There are five seats on the OBGMA board, which are filled by representatives from the city of Ojai, Casitas Municipal Water District, Golden State Water Company, Ojai Water Conservation District and mutual water companies (one directed is elected to represent

three mutual water companies).

The OBGMA oversees the management of the Ojai Basin, and is required by law to have a groundwater management plan to guide its operations. Elements of OBGMA's Groundwater Management Plan are implemented in the form of policies, rules, regulations and ordinances. Water drawn from the basin is divided roughly equally between urban and agricultural users.

## LAND MANAGEMENT/RECREATION

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### OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY

[www.ovlc.org](http://www.ovlc.org)

805/649-6852

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) is a nonprofit organization formed in 1987 to protect the Ojai Valley's views, trails, water, wildlife and working agricultural lands. The OVLC also provides educational enrichment for the community on its open space preserves. OVLC has roughly 1,200 members and is governed by an 11-member board of directors.

OVLC receives funding from member dues and donations, as well as grants and mitigation fees. Working only with willing landowners on a voluntary basis, OVLC protects land in perpetuity through purchase or by donation of either land or conservation easements (which convey only the development rights to the OVLC, not the title). OVLC has permanently protected 12 properties totaling over 2,100 acres, including roughly 1,900 acres of publically accessible open space preserves, and several conservation easements totaling over 200 acres. The Ventura River Preserve, OVLC's largest property, protects nearly 1,600 acres in and adjacent to the Ventura River, including three miles of the river. Over 25 miles of trails are maintained for the public's enjoyment on the six preserves that are open for public access.

Habitat restoration and enhancement is ongoing on many of OVLC's properties, including Arundo removal; and native grassland, oak woodlands and wetland habitat restorations.

OVLC has a number of ongoing education programs, leads hikes and hosts docents on its preserves, provides hands-on volunteer opportunities for students and interested community members of all ages, and is actively engaged with local partners for watershed protection. OVLC hosts, on behalf of the Ventura River Watershed Council, the Ventura River watershed coordinator—a grant-funded staff position serving the Watershed Council.



### VENTURA HILLSIDES CONSERVANCY

[www.venturahillsides.org](http://www.venturahillsides.org)

805/643-8044

Formed in 2003, the Ventura Hillside Conservancy (VHC) is a land trust operating in the Ventura region to protect and conserve open space resources through acquisition of land and easements, stewardship of protected lands, and public education about local natural resources. VHC has over 700 members and is governed by a 10-member board of trustees.

VHC receives funding from member dues and donations, grants and events. VHC owns seven properties totaling nearly 30 acres. Twenty-five of these acres are located in or adjacent to the Ventura River.

VHC's most recent land acquisition, the Willoughby Preserve, located near downtown Ventura, had been known for decades as "hobo jungle." With lots of help from volunteers, social service organizations, local government and businesses, VHC has reclaimed the property to make it a clean and safe place where the community can enjoy rare access to the lower Ventura River.

VHC enjoys a strong volunteer base, organizes many community events, and is especially dedicated to creating opportunities for youth to experience and connect with nature.



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### **VENTURA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

[www.vcrd.org](http://www.vcrd.org)

805/764-5130

The Ventura County Resource Conservation District (RCD) is a special district that provides assistance to help rural and urban communities in Ventura County conserve, protect and restore natural resources. A nine-member board of directors governs the RCD; directors must be landowners or agents of landowners residing within the district. The RCD is one of 99 resource conservation districts in California, and is primarily funded by grants.

The RCD's function is to make available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land managers for the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

Priority issues for the RCD include preservation of agriculture, open space advocacy, outreach and education on water resources, watershed protection, watershed restoration, control and/or eradication of invasive species, evaluating the potential impacts of loss of wildlife habitat, and maintaining air quality.

Some of the RCD's programs in the Ventura River watershed include the Mobile Lab Irrigation Efficiency Evaluation Program, staff support for the Horse and Livestock Watershed Alliance, horse and livestock property best management practice education.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL**

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**Surfrider  
Foundation**



**Ventura County  
Chapter**

### **SURFRIDER FOUNDATION, VENTURA COUNTY CHAPTER**

<http://ventura.surfrider.org>

[www.venturariver.org](http://www.venturariver.org)

The Surfrider Foundation, formed in 1984, works for the protection and enjoyment of oceans, waves and beaches through a powerful activist network. The Ventura County chapter was formed in 1991 by local ocean enthusiasts who were concerned by the threat of beach armoring at Surfers' Point, which would have destroyed the surf break and the beach. The local chapter is governed by a five-member board of directors.

With over 800 members, many volunteers, and dedicated and persistent leadership, the local chapter is known for effectively working on integrated solutions to a number of local issues threatening the ocean, waves and beaches.

Current programs and campaigns include: Ocean-friendly Gardens, an education program that uses conservation, permeability and retention to protect the environment and reduce polluted runoff; Rise Above Plastics, an education program aimed at reducing the impact of plastics in the marine environment by raising community awareness about

the dangers of plastic pollution and presenting alternatives; Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration, an effort to remove the dam that is blocking sediment flow to local beaches and preventing migration of anadromous steelhead to their historic spawning grounds; Ventura River Parkway, an effort to restore the Ventura River ecosystem and recreate the human connection to the river that once existed; and Surfer's Point Managed Retreat, an ecosystem-based approach to managing the erosion at Surfer's Point, as an alternative to building a seawall.



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### **SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER**

[www.sbck.org](http://www.sbck.org)

805/563-3377

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is a grassroots non-profit organization, founded in 1999, whose mission is to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds through science-based advocacy, education, field work and enforcement. Channelkeeper is advised by a 13-member board of directors.

Channelkeeper works on the water and in the communities along the Santa Barbara Channel to monitor water quality, restore aquatic ecosystems, advocate for clean water, enforce environmental laws, and educate and engage citizens in implementing solutions to water pollution and aquatic habitat degradation.

A member of both the international Waterkeeper Alliance and the California Coastkeeper Alliance, Channelkeeper is part of a large network of groups working to patrol and protect watersheds and defend their communities' right to clean water.

In the Ventura River watershed, Channelkeeper collects and analyzes surface water samples from the Ventura River on a monthly basis with their Ventura River Stream Team. Over a decade's worth of data has been collected and studied thus far, representing one of the best long-term datasets that exists on the river's water quality. This data is used by regulators to inform regulations (such as TMDLs) for the watershed. Channelkeeper also acts as a watchdog for environmental impacts in the watershed, engages many volunteers through their water sampling program, and educates hundreds of local students about the Ventura watershed and water quality testing techniques.



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### **OJAI VALLEY GREEN COALITION, WATERSHED COUNCIL**

<http://ojaivalleygreencoalition.com>

805/669-8445

The Ojai Valley Green Coalition (OVGC) is a nonprofit organization established in 2007 to advance a green, sustainable and resilient Ojai Valley. OVGC has over 800 members and is governed by a 9-member board of directors.

OVGC works on a variety of fronts, with three separate issue-focused councils: renewables, energy efficiency and appropriate lighting; local food; and watershed literacy and water security.

Education about ecological issues and sustainable practices is central to the work of OVGC. They organize an annual Green Home and Building Tour; host numerous educational meetings, films and events; and maintain a green resources lending library.

OVGC advocates for changes in local policy, including initiatives to ban plastic bags and

reduce excessive nighttime lighting. OVGC facilitates environmental responsibility by making it easier: they organize waste collection and recycling events, secure discounts on solar systems, and provide bicycle valet parking at events. And OVGC works on the ground restoring creekside habitats.



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## FRIENDS OF THE VENTURA RIVER

<http://friendsofventurariver.org>

805/620-7001

Friends of Ventura River has a long history of advocating for the Ventura River. The group was established in 1974 to provide an independent organized means of addressing the multitude of threats to the Ventura River and to actively promote the preservation and restoration of its natural resource, including its unique fish and wildlife resources, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Since its inception the Friends have actively participated in a wide variety of planning and regulatory processes affecting the Ventura River watershed at the local, state, regional and federal levels. It has also pursued and supported research of the botanical and fishery resources of the Ventura River, producing important studies of the estuary and the steelhead habitats of the Ventura River watershed. These reports have stimulated further scientific investigations, which have contributed to the management of the river's biological resources.

Through active participation in land-use and water management programs, the Friends, in collaboration with other local groups, have helped shape local, state and federal plans, including the Ventura County General Plan, Ojai General Plan, City and County Local Coastal Plans, Regional Water Quality Control Board Santa Clara River Basin (4A) Plan, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Ventura County Water Management Plan, and the Ventura River Trail Plan. Over the years the Friends have participated in a case-by-case review of countless land use decisions affecting the Ventura River.

The Friends contributed to the establishment of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Teague Memorial Watershed to protect the Lake Casitas water supply, and to both the Ventura River Preserve and Confluence Preserve, which are now owned and managed by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy.

In 1999, with support from Patagonia and the Environmental Defense Center, the Friends organized the first multi-agency symposium to consider the removal of Matilija Dam.

The Friends were also instrumental in getting the Tidewater goby and the southern California steelhead listed as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act in 1994 and 1997.

Recent work includes advocating for a Ventura River Parkway to advance protection and public enjoyment of the Ventura River, developing a watershed resources document library, and ongoing advocacy and education about the river and its watershed.



### FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

[www.farmbureauvc.com](http://www.farmbureauvc.com)

805/289-0155

Founded in 1914, the Farm Bureau of Ventura County is an independent, non-partisan organization that is not affiliated with any government entity. It acts as an advocate for the county's agricultural industry, promoting policies and fostering community action intended to preserve that industry's sustainability and vitality.

For decades, the Farm Bureau has played an important role in the effort to ensure an adequate, reliable and affordable supply of water for Ventura County. It has worked with local water agencies to manage rivers, reservoirs and aquifers equitably and efficiently, and to defend local water supplies against degradation and depletion.

In recent years, the Farm Bureau has taken a leadership role in helping farmers and ranchers comply with water-quality regulations aimed at agriculture. The most prominent of these efforts has been the creation and administration of the Ventura County Agricultural Irrigated Lands Group, or VCAILG. VCAILG is a program that allows participating growers to achieve compliance with state and federal water quality requirements by working collectively as a "discharger group"—a much more cost-effective approach than individual farm compliance. The Farm Bureau administers the VCAILG program, with input and assistance from a VCAILG Steering Committee. It also partners with numerous public agencies, including municipalities, water purveyors, and state and county entities to coordinate watershed-wide initiatives to address water-quality issues.



### FRIEND'S RANCHES, EMILY AYALA

[www.friendsranches.com](http://www.friendsranches.com)

805/646-2871

The Friend's Ranches family has been growing citrus in the Ojai Valley for over 100 years. Five generations of the Friend family have lived and farmed in the valley.

Friend's Ranches owns the roadside packinghouse familiar to travelers up Highway 33 near the mouth of the Ventura River. They pack citrus for wholesale markets and pack fruit and juices for farmers' markets.

Friend's Ranches has several farm properties in the watershed, each with different microclimates. Over the years they have learned which varieties prefer which climate. Tangerines are sweetest on their Matilija canyon property; navels do well in the Ojai Valley's east end.

Friend's Ranches is a member of the Ojai Pixie Growers Association, a group of almost 40 family-scale tangerine growers in the Ojai Valley who get together to share information about growing and selling the specialty Ojai Pixie tangerine—an exceptionally sweet, late-season tangerine particularly well suited to the Ojai Valley's climate.

In addition to serving on the Ventura River Watershed Council, Emily Ayala of Friend's Ranches sits on the Ojai Valley Water Conservation District, and is active with other growers in the valley in the education about protection of the agricultural industry in the Ojai Valley.



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## **OIL EXTRACTION – AERA ENERGY**

[www.aeraenergy.com/ventura.asp](http://www.aeraenergy.com/ventura.asp)

661/665-5000

Aera Energy LLC is one of California's largest oil and gas producers, accounting for over 25% of the state's production. Formed in June 1997 and jointly owned by affiliates of Shell and ExxonMobil, they are operated as a stand-alone company through their own board of managers.

The Ventura County oil and gas operations of Aera cover approximately 4,300 acres located largely in the Ventura River watershed just to the northwest of the city of Ventura. Production averages 13,900 barrels per day of crude oil and 7.8 mmcf per day of natural gas. Oil is transported to refineries in the Los Angeles basin. Natural gas is shipped to Southern California Gas Co.

Aera and its forerunner companies have been actively producing crude oil in Ventura County since the 1920s. Much of the operation is now in secondary recovery water injection. Aera is the largest onshore oil producer in Ventura County.

Aera and its employees are actively involved in the local community, providing support to programs that benefit local students, charities, police programs, and economic development.

Over 110 employees work directly for Aera in Ventura, and over 600 contractors are employed at the site for daily operations and development. In addition, the company directly supports many local businesses, such as service providers on Ventura Avenue.



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## **VENTURA COUNTY COALITION OF LABOR, AGRICULTURE AND BUSINESS**

[www.colabvc.org](http://www.colabvc.org)

805/633-2291

Ventura County Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business, or VC COLAB, is a 501c(6) nonprofit formed in 2010 to work with public agencies and decision makers in Ventura County to provide regulatory solutions that support business and private property owners. VC COLAB is governed by a 14-member board of directors. The local group cooperates with the COLAB groups in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

VC COLAB seeks to provide a full-time presence in Ventura County to provide a balance between environmental regulatory and economic concerns. Their goal is to facilitate a coalition of agricultural and other businesses to identify and research issues that impact business, work with regulatory agencies and propose solutions.

Through active participation in land-use management policy development, VC COLAB has helped shape local policy and regulations, including the county's Initial Study Assessment Guidelines for assessing biological impacts from development projects under the California Environmental Quality Act, the county's grading ordinance, and the Algae TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) state promulgated water quality regulation.

VC COLAB is also working with the Ventura County Resource Conservation District, Horse and Livestock Watershed Alliance and the Ventura County Cattlemen's Association to draft "Waivers" with the Regional Water Board that will help horse, cattle and other livestock owners preserve their lifestyles and livelihoods.