



Charter

Ventura River Watershed Council

Amended December 11, 2014

I. Purpose

The Ventura River Watershed Council (hereinafter “Council”) was formed to provide a framework for enhancing communication and collaboration among diverse stakeholders in order to better address the Ventura River watershed’s many complex and cross-jurisdictional issues.

II. Mission

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.

III. Scope of Powers

The Ventura River Watershed Council is a voluntary organization and has no powers or authorities other than those already possessed by its member agencies. The agencies, organizations, and interests represented on the Council are not obligated to adopt or carry out the recommendations of the Council, but will give due consideration to the recommendations and take actions they consider appropriate.

IV. Strategies

1. Collaborate on the development of a comprehensive, integrated watershed management plan to guide watershed 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 Ventura County 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.

V. Members and Committees

The Ventura River Watershed Council is a public forum open to anyone interested in the watershed, and the

Council shall actively seek diverse membership broadly representative of the watershed stakeholders. There are two categories of members: general members and Leadership Committee members, with the primary difference being that Leadership Committee members are voting members. Some of the Leadership Committee members will form the advisory Leadership Executive Committee.

A. General Members

General members are all stakeholders who attend the Watershed Council meetings and who are not Leadership Committee members. General members are not voting members.

B. Leadership Committee

The Leadership Committee’s purpose is to ensure that a balance of perspectives and interests are represented in the Council’s decisions. There are five categories of members within the Leadership Committee: government, water and sanitary, land management/recreation, environmental, and business/landowner. There shall be a maximum of 21 members on the Leadership Committee, and the maximum number of members in each of the five categories shall be as follows:

Government.....	5	Environmental.....	4
Water and Sanitary.....	5	Business/Landowner	4
Land Management/Recreation	3		

These numbers are meant to generally represent an ideal balance of representation and to ensure parity among the categories. At any given time the Leadership Committee may agree to include more than the maximum number of members. New members may be self-nominated or nominated by any member of the Council. The final list of representatives in each category of members shall be determined by the various participants from that category. If there is not consensus among those members, the Leadership Committee will make the final determination. Representation of interests from both the upper/Ojai part of the watershed and the lower/Ventura part of the watershed shall be sought. An organization or entity may be represented by only one member on the Leadership Committee; for the purposes of this rule different divisions of local government shall be considered separate entities.

Leadership Committee members are encouraged to designate an alternate who will participate on the Leadership Committee in the member's absence. Changes to the specific person (primary member or alternate) representing a given organization do not need to be approved in advance by the Leadership Committee. The Leadership Committee will act to replace members who resign or are unable to continue serving, and will strive to maintain continuity and the balance of interests by giving preference to representation from the same agencies and organizations.

The Leadership Committee’s responsibilities shall include:

1. Provide direction to the Council in order to achieve the Council’s purpose, mission, and objectives.
2. Elect representatives and alternates from the watershed to serve on the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County Leadership Committee, and determine the term of that service.
3. Contribute to updates of the Ventura County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan and revisions and provide feedback to Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County.
4. Set and weigh criteria for grant project ranking.
5. Form subcommittees on any issue as needed.
6. Seek ongoing financial support for staff positions.
7. Review this charter and the Leadership Committee and Leadership Executive Committee membership annually and make changes as appropriate.

Current Leadership Committee members are shown in the table below. Members highlighted in **bold**

currently serve on the Leadership Executive Committee.

	Primary¹	Alternate
Government		
Ventura County Board of Supervisors	Steve Offerman	Brian Brennan
Ventura County Watershed Protection District	Gerhardt Hubner²	Ewelina Mutkowska
City of Ventura, Ventura Water	Karen Waln	Omar Castro
City of Ojai	Glen Hawks	Greg Grant
California Coastal Conservancy	Sam Jenniches	
Water and Sanitary		
Casitas Water District	Ron Merckling	Russ Baggerly
Ventura River County WD	Bert Rapp	Bruce Kuebler
Ojai Valley Sanitary District	Jeff Palmer	Ron Sheets
Meiners Oaks Water District	Mike Hollebrands	Jim Kentosh
Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency	CeCe Vandermeer	Jerry Conrow
Land Management/Recreation		
Ventura County RCD	Marty Melvin	Dana Bogdanich
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy	Brian Stark	Jill Taylor
Ventura Hillside Conservancy	Derek Poultney	Lee Sherman
Environmental		
Surfrider Foundation	Paul Jenkin	Kathy Bremer
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper	Ben Pitterle³	Jenna Driscoll
Ojai Valley Green Coalition, Watershed Council	Renee Roth	Ched Myers/Elaine Enns
Friends of the Ventura River	Diane Underhill	Kathy Bremer
Business/Landowner		
Ventura County Farm Bureau	Nancy Broschart	John Krist
Pixe Growers Association	Emily Ayala	Lisa Brenneis
Oil Extraction – Aera Energy	Louise Lampara	Chris Logan
Ventura County Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business	Lynn Jensen	Lauren Swift
1: Bold indicates the member serves on the Leadership Executive Committee (LEC).		
2: The Ventura County Watershed Protection District member serves on the LEC as a general member, not as the government category member.		
3: Ben Pitterle serves on the LEC as backup to Paul Jenkin.		

Decision-Making

The Leadership Committee will strive to make its decisions and recommendations by consensus, except that election of WCVC Steering Committee representatives shall be by simple majority. A quorum is required to make a consensus decision. A quorum is a minimum of five of the current members on the Leadership Committee. A consensus decision is one that all members either support, or are neutral about, and that no members explicitly cannot support.

When a decision is requested, Leadership Committee members will indicate their level of consensus with their thumbs or the numbers 1 through 4, as described below.

- 1/thumbs up = Agree/support
- 2/thumbs sideways = Neutral
- 3/thumbs down = Cannot support
- 4 = Recuse*

* Recusal: Members may choose to abstain from indicating any level of consensus but are encouraged to

participate in the Leadership Committee discussion on the issue. Member abstention will not affect the ability of the Leadership Committee to reach consensus.

When the Leadership Committee agrees that it has exhausted all efforts to reach consensus on a particular issue, it has the option to

1. Table the item for a period of time or until new information is provided.
2. Allow the issue to be decided by a 75 percent majority vote, meaning 75 percent of the members present support the motion.

Whenever consensus cannot be reached on an item proposed, that item will be scheduled for further discussion, drafting, information gathering, etc. as appropriate. The group will not resort to a 75 percent majority vote until it has given serious effort and time to addressing the concerns of those not consenting.

The decision-making process should include the following elements:

1. Issue/Item introduction with necessary background or supporting information.
2. Council discussion
3. Straw poll – non-binding (is there consensus or is further discussion necessary to address concerns)
4. Further discussion – if necessary
5. Official binding vote

Behavior/Attendance

1. Members will treat each other with respect, will not monopolize meeting time, and will listen to and try to understand one another's views.
2. Members will encourage ideas that are new and creative.
3. In order to provide space for everyone to contribute, members will keep their statements as brief and clear as possible and no one person or subgroup will dominate the exchange.
4. Members will search for opportunities to develop group solutions and to resolve conflicts.
5. Members will strive to adhere to the charter and will be responsible for its enforcement.
6. Leadership Committee members must demonstrate their commitment to the Council through attendance and involvement. Leadership Committee members who miss three consecutive meetings without sending an alternate may be considered inactive and may be removed from the committee.

C. Leadership Executive Committee

The Leadership Executive Committee shall consist of six members; one nominated from each of the five Leadership Committee categories, plus a representative from Ventura County Watershed Protection District. Leadership Executive Committee member alternates may serve in their place if necessary, unless otherwise noted. Leadership Executive Committee members must be funding supporters of the Council. The Leadership Executive Committee's responsibilities shall include:

1. Provide direction to and provide input on the performance of the watershed coordinator.
2. Assist the watershed coordinator in setting Council meeting dates and agendas.
3. Recommend positions on administrative, budget, and policy issues to the Leadership Committee.

D. Other Committees

The Leadership Committee may appoint other committees or work groups to assist in achieving its objectives. Each committee chair or work group leader shall be a member of the Leadership Committee.

VI. Staff

The Ventura River Watershed Council is served by a part-time watershed coordinator. This contractor position is currently supported by contributions from local entities. Additional staff support is provided by the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County program director.

VII. Meetings

The Ventura River Watershed Council, consisting of general members and Leadership Committee members, will attempt to meet at least eight times per year, with at least two of those meetings held in evening hours for the convenience of those who cannot attend daytime meetings. Technical advisory committees, ad hoc committees, or other committees formed by the Leadership Committee will meet on an as-needed basis. Each regular Council meeting shall be announced at least one week in advance via the Council's email distribution list, and at least two weeks in advance on the Council's website (www.venturawatershed.org) calendar.

VIII. Amendments

The Leadership Committee may adopt, amend, or repeal any portion of this charter with a Leadership Committee quorum at a meeting of the Leadership Committee or any regular meeting of the Council provided the nature of the proposed changes are provided to all Council members at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Approved May 9, 2012

Amended September 6, 2012 (updated Mission; Objectives changed to Strategies)

Amended June 6, 2013 (updated decision-making procedures and membership structure)

Re-Approved June 5, 2014

Amended December 11, 2014.