



Ventura River Watershed Council
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To: Ventura River Watershed Council, Goals/Objectives Subcommittee
From: Lorraine Walter, Watershed Coordinator
Subject: Review of Final Recommended Goals for Watershed Management Plan

Recommendation

The proposed final language for plan goals is provided below, along with the original working draft language and discussion on the proposed language. I have developed this final language based upon additional understanding about the watershed, additional ideas from other watershed plans, input from our stakeholders, and strategic organizational considerations.

Please review this language in advance of the November 7, 2012 Goals/Objectives Subcommittee meeting so that we can formulate a final recommendation for the Watershed Council's consideration at the December 2012 meeting.

If you'd like to comment on the final recommended goals in advance of the meeting, please do so in the online shared document found at: <https://docs.google.com/open?id=0B1dE1krhx2ScMzZtWWE2QWJob0E>

History

November, 2006: The Ventura River Watershed Council helped with the development of the Ventura County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP), which includes five goals for the Ventura River watershed.

May, 2012: Staff presented a "working draft" version of goals for the Ventura River Watershed Management Plan to the Watershed Council. The proposed language was based upon the five goals for the watershed as outlined in the IRWMP, plus three additional goals deemed warranted by staff. The Council approved the working draft goals.

August, 2012: Minor goal language modifications were recommended by Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) that met to work on objectives for five of our goals as reflected in the IRWMP.

September, 2012: A minor change to the water supply goal was recommended by the Ag/Econ Subcommittee.

Goal 1: Sufficient Local Water Supplies

Original working draft language:

Sufficient local water supplies: Surface water and groundwater of sufficient quantity and rate of flow to maintain independence from imported water and reliably support ecosystem and human needs in the watershed.

Proposed final language:

Sufficient local water supplies: Sufficient local water supplies (surface water, groundwater and harvested rain) to allow continued independence from imported water and reliably support ecosystem, agricultural and human needs in the watershed now and in the future, through wise water management.

Discussion:

The original language did not address demand or management of water, just the supply side, so reference to management was added. The Ag/Econ Subcommittee recommended the explicit inclusion of “agriculture” in this goal. The TAC recommended adding “and quality of life” after “human needs” but this phrase didn’t seem to add enough to warrant the awkward sentence structure that it created. A reference to the future seemed warranted.

Goal 2: Clean Water

Original working draft language:

Clean water: Surface water and groundwater of sufficient quality to meet regulatory requirements and support ecosystem and human needs in the watershed.

Proposed final language:

Clean water: Water of sufficient quality to meet regulatory requirements and safeguard public and ecosystem health.

Discussion:

Unclean water makes us, wildlife and our supporting environment sick; “safeguarding public and ecosystem health” conveys this more precisely. The reference to type of water (surface and groundwater) was removed because we want all water to be clean (including stormwater, drinking water, etc.).

Goal 3: Integrated Flood Management

Original working draft language:

Smart flood protection: Effective approaches to flood management that integrate with natural watershed hydrology and water supply goals.

Proposed final language:

Integrated flood management: An integrated approach to flood management that improves flood protection, restores natural river processes, enhances floodplain ecosystems, increases water infiltration and storage, and balances sediment input and transport.

Discussion:

“Integrated” flood management is the resounding preference of the Council. The TAC recommended including the phrase “integrates flood protection facilities with...,” however with the suggested rewording this language may not be necessary. The rewording is intended to provide more specificity to the goal.

Goal 4: Healthy Ecosystems

Original working draft language:

Healthy ecosystems: Healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem structures, functions and processes that support a diversity of native habitats and the natural hydrology of the watershed.

Proposed final language:

Healthy ecosystems: Healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem structures, functions and processes that support a diversity of native habitats.

Discussion:

The TAC recommended deletion of the phrase “and the natural hydrology of the watershed.”

Goal 5: Access to Nature

Original working draft language:

Nature-based refuge and recreation: Ample opportunities for the public to enjoy nature.

Proposed final language:

Access to nature: Ample opportunities for the public to enjoy the watershed’s natural areas and open spaces.

Discussion:

“Access to nature” as a title is more straightforward. Reference to recreation has not been included in the proposed language, as it is unclear if/how our mandate involves recreation.

Goal 6: Smart Land and Resource Management

Original working draft language:

Smart use of land and resources: Use of land and resources in a manner that supports human needs and social goals, and is compatible with healthy ecosystem goals.

Proposed final language:

Smart land and resource management: Land and resources managed in a manner that supports social and economic goals and is compatible with healthy ecosystem goals.

Discussion:

The word “management” was chosen instead of “use,” as it can refer to both concepts. This wording also speaks more directly to our interest in focusing on local policies and regulations.

Goal 7: Preparedness

Original working draft language:

Preparedness and adaptability: Watershed management that looks ahead, thinks creatively, and is able to respond quickly to new information, change, and crisis.

Proposed final language:

Preparedness: Watershed management that looks ahead, thinks creatively, prepares for contingencies and is able to respond quickly to new information, change and crisis.

Discussion:

The word “adaptability” was deleted from the title because it can be addressed by “preparedness.” The addition of the phrase “prepares for contingencies” focuses the intent of the goal more precisely.

Goal 8: Coordinated Watershed Planning

Original working draft language: None

Proposed final language:

Coordinated watershed planning: A Watershed Council that fairly represents stakeholders; collaborates on developing an integrated watershed management plan to guide watershed priorities; facilitates communication between public, private and nonprofit stakeholders; educates and engages stakeholders; provides a forum for collecting, sharing and analyzing information about, and creatively responding to, watershed issues; and maximizes grant funding opportunities.

Discussion:

The achievement of all other seven goals will be significantly enhanced if the Watershed Council continues to exist as a coordinating entity. This is an extremely important goal for leveraging resources and efforts, and for the continuity of the watershed planning effort.

Deleted Goal

Engaged citizens: Ample opportunities for citizens to learn about the watershed and contribute to its well-being.

Discussion: Educating and engaging citizens is a critical strategy that will be addressed through the objectives and projects of the *all* of the other goals, and therefore nothing will be lost by not calling it out as a separate goal. Education and engagement of stakeholders will be particularly emphasized in the objectives of the “coordinated watershed planning” goal. This is in keeping with the Watershed Council’s desire to limit the number of goals to essential ones.

Summary of Recommended Goals

1. **Sufficient local water supplies:** Sufficient local water supplies (surface water, groundwater and harvested rain) to allow continued independence from imported water and reliably support ecosystem, agricultural and human needs in the watershed now and in the future, through wise water management.
2. **Clean water:** Water of sufficient quality to meet regulatory requirements and safeguard public and ecosystem health.
3. **Integrated flood management:** An integrated approach to flood management that improves flood protection, restores natural river processes, enhances floodplain ecosystems, increases water infiltration and storage, and balances sediment input and transport.
4. **Healthy ecosystems:** Healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem structures, functions and processes that support a diversity of native habitats.
5. **Access to nature:** Ample opportunities for the public to enjoy the watershed's natural areas and open spaces.
6. **Smart land and resource management:** Land and resources managed in a manner that supports social and economic goals and is compatible with healthy ecosystem goals.
7. **Preparedness:** Watershed management that looks ahead, thinks creatively, prepares for contingencies and is able to respond quickly to new information, change and crisis.
8. **Coordinated watershed planning:** A Watershed Council that fairly represents stakeholders; collaborates on developing an integrated watershed management plan to guide watershed priorities; facilitates communication between public, private and nonprofit stakeholders; educates and engages stakeholders; provides a forum for collecting, sharing and analyzing information about, and creatively responding to, watershed issues; and maximizes grant funding opportunities.