



June 18, 2019

Ventura County Planning Commission
County Government Center
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

**RE: GPU Policy and Program Recommendations for Water Resources Element
Relating to Climate Change**

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The climate models for impacts on Ventura County's water resources show that **extreme rain events in short time periods are as big a threat as longer periods of heat with no rain**. To address the disruption caused historically by flooding and landslides in the Ventura River Watershed, we proposed a feasibility study for an aerial lift or tram in the Transportation Element. We need an alternative to the use of Highway 33, which is highly vulnerable to extreme events. Such a project reduces Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and gives resilience to the residents and businesses of the Ojai Valley.

Storm water management, especially on private property is not given enough priority in the draft General Plan. **We recommend a focus on restoring the small water cycles in the watersheds**. Such a pilot project is planned for the Ojai Valley by Ventura County Resource Conservation District (RCD) described here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SjCxr55Ck_DtdQ5s7dl2LFFfIROufBGC

The RCD project is based on the understanding that **rain is a biogenic process (produced by a living system), that it is in a close symbiotic relationship with trees and vegetation**. Over 60% of heat from the sun falls on earth as sensible heat (heat that feels hot as opposed to latent heat). Degraded land does not provide evapotranspiration to cool the soil or supply moisture to the local atmosphere. Without vegetation, there is less rain. Hotter air pushes clouds away where they tend to drop extreme amounts of rain elsewhere causing floods and more degradation. As the water in the soil and groundwater decrease, vegetation wilts and even less water goes into the atmosphere, reducing the chance of rain. The weaker the moderating effects of rain on temperatures, the more extreme the weather events become as described in the modeling report by Drs. Nina Oakley and Ben Hatchett of the Desert Research Institute.
https://wrcc.dri.edu/Docs/VenturaClimate2019_lores.pdf

Local water cycles are becoming erratic and will worsen when degraded land and concrete drains take rain to the ocean instead of supporting vegetation and evapotranspiration. Contrary to the statements of professionals in the Water Focus Group water infiltration is not the same thing as groundwater recharge. They have different functions and both are necessary. The simple way to explain what is needed is called slow it, spread it, and sink it. The methods are not costly, especially in light of prevented damage. It requires a new understanding, engagement and commitment of landowners. Experienced people then design appropriate measures, such as micro-basins, small berms and swales, and check-dams in dry beds that will function during rain events to keep the water on the land. It is likely that once landowners agree and measures are designed, much of that work can be done through green jobs creation or community volunteers. Low and no-cost models include [Ecosystem Restoration Camps](#) and the programs done in neighborhoods by [Daily Acts of Petaluma](#). Such efforts will facilitate revegetation and the restoration of the cycle of evapotranspiration and rainfall in a watershed that cools the local climate, reduces flooding, restores springs, and stops storm water from contributing to sea level rise.



There are many things the County can do to achieve the goals of the Water Resources Element, but **there is a concerning lack of urgency in this Element. The unstable water situation calls for setting specific policy goals and targets with 2025 milestones ambitious enough to drive widespread changes, such as:**

- Water conservation, including through aggressive tiered rate programs.
- Widespread adoption of water efficiency (*aerators/flow valves/low flush, including commercial facilities*).
- Widespread adoption of gray water systems.
- Investment in ‘Toilet to Tap’ reclaimed water supply.
- More recycled water for agriculture and groundwater.
- Desalination of brackish water especially as renewable energy resources are developed.

Above all we urge the creation of a Master Plan for the Restoration of Small Water Cycles and specific implementation programs for each of the three watersheds.

We are sharing our recommendations on the draft document with our added amendments and new Policies and Programs underlined and a Glossary to help clarify necessary distinctions and concepts within this topic.

Sincerely,

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WATER RESOURCES POLICIES & PROGRAMS

GOALS LIST:

1. WATER SUPPLY
2. WATER CONSERVATION AND REUSE
3. GROUNDWATER
4. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT
5. WATER FOR AGRICULTURE

1. WATER SUPPLY

GOAL 1: To effectively manage water supply by adequately planning for the development, conservation, and protection of water resources for present and future generations. [Source: Existing GPP Goal 1.3.1.2 and Goal 4.3.1.1, modified]

WR-1.1 Sustainable Water Supply The County shall work with water suppliers, groundwater management agencies, and groundwater sustainability agencies to inventory and monitor the quantity and quality of the county's water resources, and to identify and implement measures to ensure a sustainable water supply to serve all existing and future residents. (IGC, SO) [Source: Existing GPP Goal 1.3.1.1 and Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area Plan Goal 4.2.1.1, modified]

WR-1.1-A Storm water Capture The County shall build at least 3 new multi-benefit storm water capture projects by 2025 to improve local water quality and increase local water supply; 20 by 2035; and 40 by 2050 such that at least 30,000 acre-feet per year must come from storm water capture by 2035.

WR-1.1-B Wastewater Recycling The County shall recycle 100% of all wastewater for beneficial reuse by 2035.

WR-1.1-C Water Conservation Campaigns The County shall collaborate with the water districts to support water conservation campaigns including benchmarking customer use, rate structuring to incentivize conservation, recognizing innovative water reduction initiatives, improving data gathering to identify most effective programs, expanding top

performing conservation incentive programs, landscape transformation, high efficiency washing machines, sub-metering, and evaluation of smart water meter technologies.

WR-1.2 Watershed Planning The County shall consider the location of a discretionary project within a watershed to determine whether or not it could negatively impact a water source. As part of discretionary project review, the County shall also consider local watershed management plans when considering land use development. (MPSP, RDR) [Source: New Policy]

WR-1.3 State Water Sources The County shall continue to support the conveyance of, and seek to secure water from, state sources, but with an overriding priority on self-sufficiency. With State Water Resources uncertain and high short-term energy costs, investments in State Water should not supplant investments in storm water capture, recycling, conservation and efficiency. (IGC) [Source: New Policy]

WR-1.4 Agency Collaboration The County shall participate in regional committees to coordinate planning efforts for water and land use that is consistent with the Urban Water Management Planning Act, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, the local Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, and the Countywide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (storm water and runoff management and reuse). (IGC) [Source: New Policy]

WR-1.5 Water Supplier Cooperation The County shall encourage the continued cooperation among water suppliers in the county, through entities such as the Association of Water Agencies of Ventura County and the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County, to ensure immediate and long-term water needs are met efficiently. (IGC) [Source: Existing GPP Goal 4.3.1.3, modified]

WR-1.6 Water Supply Inter-Ties The County shall encourage the continued cooperation among water suppliers in the county, through entities such as Association of Water Agencies of Ventura County and the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County, to establish and maintain emergency inter-tie projects among water suppliers. (IGC) [Source: New Policy]

WR-1.7 Water Supplier Consolidation The County shall encourage the consolidation of water suppliers where necessary to ensure all residents are receiving water of adequate quality and quantity, and to encourage sharing of local resources and enhancement of managerial and technical expertise and capacity. (IGC) [Source: New Policy]

WR-1.8 Groundwater Basin Use for Water Storage Where technically feasible, the County shall support the use of groundwater basins for water storage. (IGC) [Source: New Policy] **WR-1.9 Integrated Regional Water Management Plan** The County shall continue to support and participate with the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County in implementing and regularly updating the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. (IGC) [Source: New Policy]

WR-1.10 Adequate Water for Discretionary Development The County shall require all discretionary development to demonstrate an adequate long-term supply of water through water efficiency, storm water capture and recycling as appropriate and with incentives for net zero design. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 4.3.2.1, modified]

WR-1.11 Water Quality Protection for Discretionary Development The County shall evaluate the potential for discretionary development to cause deposition and discharge of sediment, debris, waste and other pollutants into surface runoff, drainage systems, surface water bodies, and groundwater. The County shall require discretionary development to minimize potential deposition and discharge through point source controls, storm water treatment, runoff reduction measures, best management practices, and low impact development. (RDR) [Source: New Policy]

2. WATER CONSERVATION AND REUSE

GOAL 2: To promote efficient use of water resources through water conservation, protection, and restoration. [Source: Existing GPP Goal 1.3.1.7, modified]

WR-2.0 Water Infiltration Standard. The county will require that 100% of average rainfall be retained onsite in soil and reservoirs. [Proposed by 350]

WR-2.1 Non-Potable Water Use The County shall encourage the use of non-potable reclaimed water, such as tertiary treated wastewater and household graywater, for industrial, agricultural, and landscaping needs. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Goal 1.3.1.6, modified]

WR-2.2 Water Use Efficiency for Discretionary Development The County shall require the use of water conservation techniques for discretionary development, as appropriate. Such techniques include low-flow plumbing fixtures in new construction that meet or exceed the state Plumbing Code, use of gray water or reclaimed water for landscaping, retention of storm water runoff for direct use and/or groundwater recharge, and landscape

water efficiency standards that meet or exceed the standards in the California Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance. (IGC, RDR) [Source: New Policy]

WR-2.3 Low-Impact Development The County shall require discretionary development to incorporate low impact development design features and best management practices, including integration of storm water capture facilities, including infiltration, consistent with County Storm water Permit. (RDR) [Source: NBVC JLUS, Strategy BIO-1A]

WR-2.4 Reduce Potable Water Use The County shall strive for efficient use of potable water in County buildings and facilities through conservation measures, and technological advancements. (SO) [Source: New Policy]

3. GROUNDWATER

GOAL 3: To maintain and restore the chemical, physical, and biological integrity and quantity of groundwater resources. [Source: Existing GPP Goal 1.3.1.3, modified]

WR-3.1 Groundwater Management The County shall work with water suppliers, water users, groundwater management agencies, and groundwater sustainability agencies to manage groundwater resources within the sustainable yield of each basin to ensure that county residents and businesses have reliable, high-quality groundwater to serve existing and planned land uses during prolonged drought years. (IGC, RDR, SO) [Source: New Policy]

WR-3.2 Important Groundwater Recharge Area Protection In areas identified as important recharge areas by the County or the applicable Groundwater Sustainability Agency, the County shall condition discretionary development to limit impervious surfaces where feasible and shall require mitigation in cases where there is the potential for discharge of harmful pollutants within important groundwater recharge areas. (IGC, RDR) [Source: New Policy]

WR-3.3 Groundwater Recharge Projects The County shall support groundwater recharge projects consistent with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of groundwater. (IGC, RDR, SO) [Source: New Policy]

WR-3.4 In-Stream and Recycled Water Use for Groundwater Recharge The County shall encourage the use of in-stream water flow and recycled water for groundwater recharge while balancing the needs of urban and agricultural uses, and healthy ecosystems. (RDR) [Source: New Policy]

WR-3.5 Discretionary Development Subject to CEQA Statement of Overriding Considerations – Water Quantity and Quality The County shall require that discretionary development shall not significantly impact the quantity or quality of water resources within watersheds, groundwater recharge areas or groundwater basins. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 1.3.2.4, modified]

The County may consider revising the above policy to allow the decision-making body to adopt a CEQA Statement of Overriding Consideration for significant environmental impacts for all areas of the unincorporated County, thereby providing the opportunity to balance a project's impacts against its potential economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits.

WR-3.6 Out-of-River Mining and Groundwater The County shall require discretionary development for out-of-river mining below the historic or predicted high groundwater level in the Del Norte/El Rio (Oxnard Forebay Basin) to demonstrate that exaction activities will not interfere with or affect groundwater quality and quantity pursuant to the County's Initial Study Assessment Guidelines. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 1.3.2.7, modified]

WR-3.7 Discretionary Development and Conditions of Approval – Oil, Gas, and Water Wells The County shall reduce oil production by 40% below 2013 levels by 2025 and lead interagency cooperation to develop a sunset strategy for oil and gas production operations countywide. There will be no new oil and gas drilling and old wells will be removed and plugged. New water wells will be approved under advisement and conditions recommended by the appropriate Sustainable Groundwater Management Agency. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 1.3.2.8, modified]

WR-3.8 New Water Wells in the Oxnard Plain Pressure Basin The County shall prohibit new water wells in the Oxnard Plain Pressure Basin if they would increase seawater intrusion in the Oxnard or Mugu aquifers. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 1.3.2.9, modified]

WR-3.9-0 Recycled Water on Golf Courses The County shall convert 85% of public golf course acreage to recycled water

WR-3.9 Discretionary Development and Conditions of Approval – Golf Course Irrigation The County shall require that discretionary development for new golf courses shall be subject to the conditions of approval that prohibit landscape irrigation with water from groundwater basins or inland surface waters identified as Municipal and Domestic Supply or Agricultural Supply in the California Regional Water Quality Control Board's Water Quality Control Plan unless:

1. The existing and planned water supplies for a Hydrologic Area, including interrelated Hydrologic Areas and Subareas, are shown to be adequate to meet the projected demands for existing uses as well as reasonably foreseeable probable future uses within the area; or
 2. It is demonstrated that the total groundwater extraction/recharge for the golf course will be equal to or less than the historic groundwater extraction/recharge for the site as defined in the County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines.
 3. [Where feasible,] reclaimed water shall be utilized for new golf courses. (RDR) [Source: Existing GPP Policy 1.3.2.10, modified]
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4. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

GOAL 4: To protect and, where feasible, enhance watersheds and aquifer recharge areas through integration of multiple facets of watershed-based approaches. [Source: Existing GPP Goal 1.3.1.5, modified]

WR-4.1 Integrated Watershed Management The County shall work with water suppliers, wastewater utilities, and storm water management entities to shift toward the integrated management of surface and groundwater, storm water treatment and use, recycled water and conservation, infiltration, and desalination. (IGC, SO) [Source: New Policy]

COMMENT: This should be in the CAP.

WR-4.1-A Restoration of Small Water Cycles The County shall work with the forest service, land trusts and large private land owners to create a Master Plan for all natural and working lands to develop the full potential of integrated management to slow spread and sink storm water to infiltrate the ground and recharge aquifers while supporting reforestation and restoration of the function of watershed ecosystems, conserve and protect groundwater resources, and clean up creeks, streams, and estuaries.

This should be in the CAP

WR-4.1-B Slow It. Spread It. Sink It! For New Development

The County shall enforce Best Management Practices (BMP) and Low Impact Development (LID) for larger scale developments to incorporate “green” storm water management practices

WR-4.1-C Slow It. Spread It. Sink It! For Existing Development The County shall work with owners of developed properties to implement Best Management Practices (BMP) to slow the runoff, spread it out in planters, rain gardens, or over other impervious surfaces and not into drainage pipes, and sink it back into the ground.

WR-4.2 Watershed Management Funding The County shall continue to seek funding and support coordination of watershed planning and watershed-level project implementation to protect local watersheds. (FB) [Source: New Policy]

5. WATER FOR AGRICULTURE

GOAL 5. To sustain the agricultural sector by ensuring an adequate water supply through water efficiency and conservation. [Source: New Goal]

WR-5.1 Water for Agricultural Uses The County shall work with the appropriate agencies to effectively manage water quantity and quality to ensure long-term, adequate availability of water for agricultural uses. (IGC) [Source: New Policy]

WR-5.2 Agricultural Water Efficiency The County shall support programs designed to reduce agricultural water consumption and increase infiltration. (PI) [Source: New Policy]

WR-5.3 Reclaimed Water Use The County shall promote and facilitate the use of reclaimed wastewater for agricultural irrigation in accordance with state requirements, to conserve untreated or potable water supplies. (IGC, RDR, SO) [Source: New Policy]

6. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- A. Monitor Water Supply and Water Demand** The County shall prepare Annual Reports on the Water Supply and Demand outlook for the unincorporated portions of the county. [Source: New Program]
- B. Water Supply and Use Factors Database** The County shall continue to coordinate with water districts and other appropriate agencies to establish a database on actual available supply, projected use factors for types of land use and development, and threshold limits for development within available water resources. [Source: Existing GPP Program 1.3.3.5, modified]
- C. Regional Collaboration on Water Issues and Sustainability** The County shall continue to provide data and staff resources to support collaboration on climate change and sustainability, and for planning and implementing projects that address local and regional water issues. [Source: New Program]
- D. Invasive Weed Abatement District for Ventura County Watersheds** The County shall provide staff resources to explore the feasibility of establishing a weed abatement district to help control invasive plant species found within Ventura County's watersheds with a priority of managing with biological, cultural and mechanical methods and minimizing herbicide use. [Source: New Program]
- E. Well Guidelines Update** The County shall coordinate with the local groundwater management agencies and local groundwater sustainability agencies and irrigation districts where appropriate to update County of Ventura Ordinance 4468 and related guidelines on the location, construction, and abandonment of water wells, if necessary. [Source: New Program]
- F. Discretionary Development Review for Adequate Water and Wastewater** The County shall verify that all discretionary development proposals demonstrate adequate methods for sewage disposal, gray water use, provide adequate drainage to avoid flooding, prevent erosion, with Best Management Practices (BMP) to keep 100% of storm water on the property and Low Impact Development (LID) to incorporate "green" storm water management practices, and prevent contamination of local water. [Source: New Program]
- F-1. Support Property Owners to Slow it. Spread it. Sink it!** The County shall provide technical assistance to property owners with existing developments to implement measures including micro-basins, micro-

swales, check-dams, curb-cuts, mulch, cover crops, and other healthy soil conservation practices that support vegetation and healthy soils while recharging aquifers. Where appropriate property owners will be encouraged to direct storm water to landscape vegetation where sediment can be filtered out and contaminants reduced through by plants and microorganisms biologically breaking down and removing pollutants. [New from 350]

F-2. Monitor Storm water Capture The County shall establish a goal to capture 30,000-acre ft/yr of storm water by 2035, incorporate storm water capture capacity into two Complete Streets, and build at least 2 new multi-benefit storm water capture projects by 2025; 30 by 2035; and 50 by 2050 [New from 350]

G. Water Conservation The County shall work with the state and local water suppliers to reduce potable water use per capita by 22% by 2025 and 25% by 2035 by educating County residents and offering incentives for water conservation features, including drought tolerant landscaping, use curb cuts to drain storm water from the street to properties, incorporate additional low water use and permeable materials into standard parkway design guidelines, establish guidelines for incorporation of green infrastructure into street and sidewalk repair projects, convert road medians and publicly-owned parkway strips to low- or no-water use landscaping that sequesters carbon and keeps storm water on-site, infiltration, graywater, and water saving plumbing technologies. [Source: Existing GPP Policy 1.3.2.5 and Goal 4.3.1.2, modified]

G-1. Educate public about water conservation Increase number of green infrastructure sites such as green streets and alleys, bio swales, infiltration cutouts (curb cuts), permeable pavement, and street trees. Evaluate incentives and existing policies to increase residential and commercial storm water capture. Expand use of permeable pavement in large infrastructure projects. Develop projects that prioritize nature-based solutions. New Program (source LA Green New Deal)

G-2. Regional Development of Water Recycling Programs The County shall collaborate with surrounding jurisdictions including the City of Los Angeles to develop technologies for helping clean recycled water, such as pilot membrane reactors, and engaging the public towards acceptance of potable reuse.

H. County Water Efficiency The County shall review water usage at County-owned facilities and from County operations, develop recommendations for water saving practices and facility improvements and publish water use at each facility. [Source: New Program]

PROPOSED TERMS FOR THE GLOSSARY

Best Management Practices (BMP) refers to effective management practices such as for storm water capture,

Curb cuts, in a raised curb condition, allow storm water to enter a storm water facility at specific points, thus concentrating runoff both in velocity and volume. Designs should be at least 18” wide with storm water facilities that have steeper side slope conditions, the bottom should slope toward the storm water facility with a minimum 2” drop in grade between the curb cut entry point and the finish grade of the storm water facility. Pea gravel can be used as a stable mulch material at the curb cut opening.

Desalination is a process that takes away mineral components from saline, salty or brackish water.

Ecosystem refers to the interacting system of a biological community and its non-living environmental surroundings. In the context of in-stream beneficial use assessment application, a complex system composed of a community of fauna and flora, and considering the chemical and physical environment with which the system is interrelated.

Infiltration refers to the penetration of water through the ground surface into sub-surface soil making it available for uptake by plants and soil organisms.

Instream flow or use, in the Water Rights context, is water use taking place within a stream channel; e.g., navigation, water quality improvement, fish propagation, recreation.

Inter-tie is an interconnection permitting passage of utility service (e.g., water or electricity) between two or more systems, such as electric and water utility systems.

Integrated Regional Watershed Management (IRWM) is a collaborative effort to identify and implement water management solutions on a regional scale that increase regional self-reliance, reduce conflict, and manage water to concurrently achieve social, environmental, and economic objectives.

Program Implementation cont.

Low Impact Development (LID) refers to systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes resulting in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of storm water in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat. EPA uses the term green infrastructure to refer to the management of wet weather flows using LID processes, and to refer to the patchwork of natural areas that provide habitat, flood protection, cleaner air and cleaner water. At both the site and regional scale, LID/GI practices aim to preserve, restore and create green space using soils, vegetation, and rainwater harvest techniques.

Reclaimed or recycled water is converted from waste water into water that can be reused for other purposes. Reuse may include irrigation of gardens and agricultural fields or replenishing surface water and recharging groundwater. Reused water may also be directed toward fulfilling certain needs in residences (e.g. toilet flushing), businesses, and industry, and can be treated to reach drinking water standards for "direct potable reuse" directly from the wastewater treatment facility into the water supply system or "indirect potable" reuse via storage before introduction into the water supply system.

Sensible heat is the increase in temperature when an object is heated, such as when the sun heats up bare ground or concrete. This contrasts with the effect of latent heat in pure substances in nature, like water, that change their state without changing their temperature. Solids can become liquids (ice to water) and liquids can become gases (water to vapor) but changes such as these require the addition or removal of heat that does not increase temperature or sensible heat. The heat that causes these changes is called latent heat. The more water there is in vegetation and surrounding air, the less we experience temperature extremes.

Slow It. Spread it. Sink It! refers to the capture and re-use of storm water runoff that falls on land to be managed for infiltration into the soil to support healthy soil conditions for farms, gardens, landscaping, and for other non-consumptive purposes including also groundwater recharge and restoration of small water cycles,

Storm water capture is the collection by infiltration or pipes of storm water in the ground or groundwater aquifers as a valuable water resource. It offers the opportunity to enhance community resilience. When done with green infrastructure, storm water capture can improve air quality, provide habitat, and reduce energy use, among other benefits. The California Water Resources Board has made major efforts to support storm water capture, from adopting statewide storm water use goals to clarifying the regulatory framework and dedicating funds for green infrastructure and multi-benefit storm water projects significant opportunity to enhance community resilience, particularly in drought- and flood-prone areas waste water recycling or water conservation that often occurs by using a holistic

Program Implementation cont.

system management approach considering the effectiveness of each practice, the costs, and resulting overall cost and effectiveness rather than looking at each practice in isolation. Some individual practices may not be effective alone but, in combination with others, may provide a key function in highly effective systems. Minimum requirements may be in more general terms allowing appropriate situation-specific sets of practices that will achieve the minimum measures.

Water conservation is the practice of minimizing the amount of water used for a purpose.

Water efficiency is reducing water wastage by measuring the amount of water required for a particular purpose and the amount of water used or delivered.
