

Los Angeles County Safe, Clean Water Program
Watershed Coordinator

Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (DRAFT)

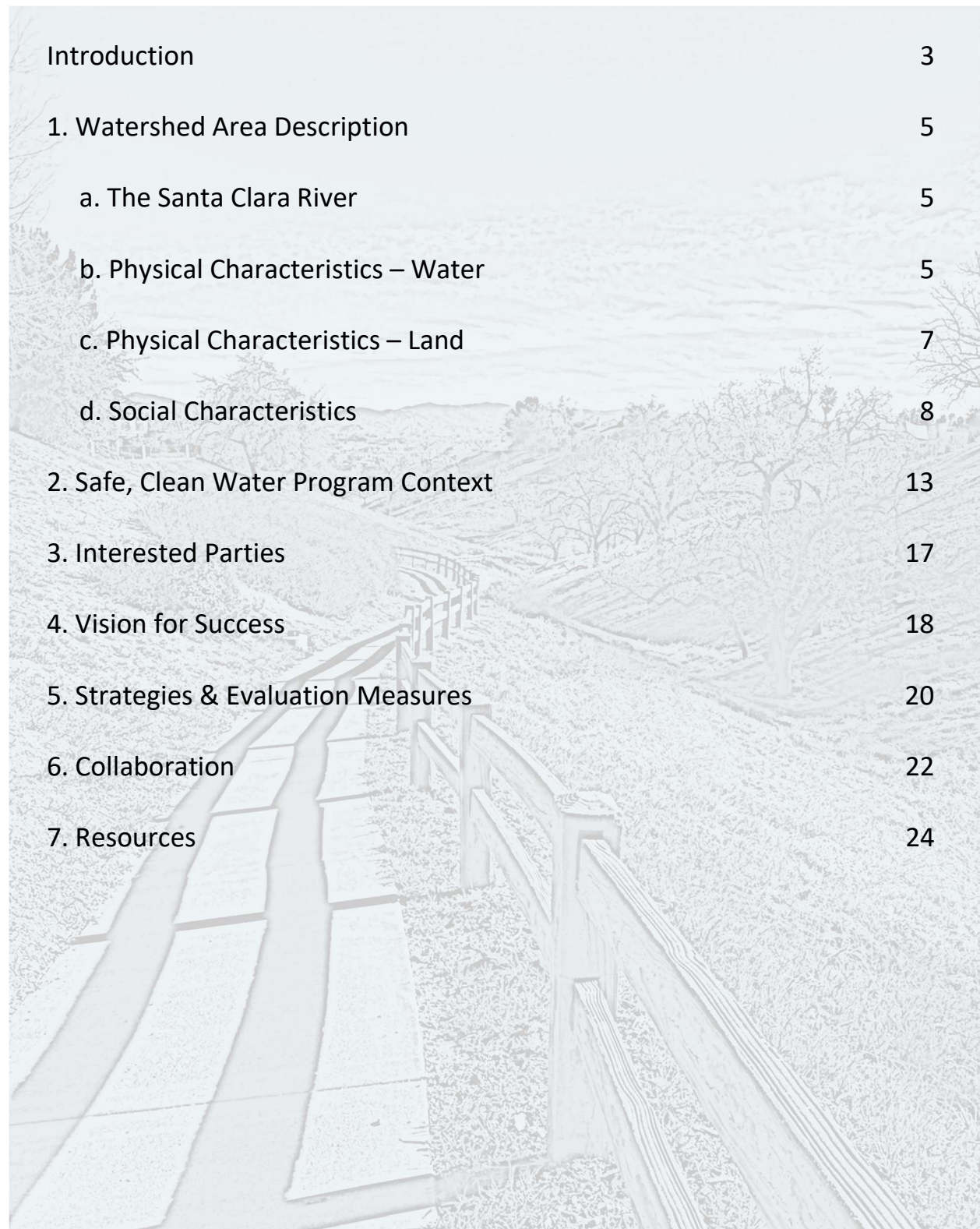


Prepared for
The Santa Clara River Watershed Area Steering Committee

by
TreePeople

2021 - 2022

Table of Contents



Introduction	3
1. Watershed Area Description	5
a. The Santa Clara River	5
b. Physical Characteristics – Water	5
c. Physical Characteristics – Land	7
d. Social Characteristics	8
2. Safe, Clean Water Program Context	13
3. Interested Parties	17
4. Vision for Success	18
5. Strategies & Evaluation Measures	20
6. Collaboration	22
7. Resources	24

Introduction

Land Acknowledgement

The authors of this Plan acknowledge that the geographic area represented in this document (the Santa Clara River Watershed Area) is on the ancestral lands and waters of the Tataviam, Tongva and Chumash people, the original stewards of this area. We recognize that these California Native American Tribes are still present in the areas reflected in this Plan. We honor their elders both past and present and the descendants who are citizens of these tribes for their exemplary respect for water; we honor their connection to and protection of one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world.

The authors also express, however, that acknowledgement of ancestral homelands alone is not enough. Through the vision, strategies and activities of the Plan herein presented, we seek to lift up the stories, culture, and communities of these tribes, and all indigenous people living in this Plan's geographic area.

Purpose of the Plan

Passage of Measure W by voters in 2018 amended the Los Angeles County Flood Control District Code establishing the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP). The program provides funding for increased stormwater and urban runoff capture, and reduced stormwater and urban runoff pollution. The overarching purpose of these activities is to improve water quality, increase water supply and enhance communities.

- Improve Water Quality: SCWP projects help local communities meet requirements of Los Angeles County's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. The intent of the permit is to ensure that trash and toxins-pollutants do not harm water quality or people's health. It sets limits on how much trash, chemicals and other toxins can be sent into our water bodies – especially the Santa Clara River and its tributaries. The Permit is overseen locally by the LA Regional Water Quality Board and is required by the United States Clean Water Act. The type of permit for LA County focuses on municipal areas, and the fact that local-city in these areas stormwater and sewer systems are separate from one another - hence the name Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System or MS4.
- Increase Water Supply: One important way water can be cleaned is to capture and clean it before it reaches our water bodies; this means the captured water can be held in storage below and above ground and allowed to percolate to replenish local groundwater to provide more locally based, sustainable and resilient sources of water for the people in our region.
- Enhance Communities: The SCWP Technical Resources Program provides Watershed Coordinators to educate and build capacity in communities and to facilitate community and stakeholder engagement with the Safe, Clean Water Program. TreePeople has been selected to serve in this capacity for the Santa Clara River Watershed Area and has crafted this Plan to provide a strategic and efficient approach to community engagement and capacity building.

Plan Preparation

In preparing this Plan, TreePeople held discussions and Interviews with 16 representatives of public agencies and community organizations including 10 members and 4 alternate members of the Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC). We conducted multiple site visits, especially to understand the geography and character of the Santa Clara River and its tributaries. We drew from a review of surveys taken by local residents between October 2020 and June 2021 as part of the Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program. We also conducted online research, looking at a variety of websites, planning documents, policies and news articles. A list of many of these resources is provided at the end of the plan. Finally, the Plan can be made available for public comment following initial presentation to the WASC.

About TreePeople

TreePeople, an award-winning non-profit organization serving Los Angeles County, provides expertise in the areas of urban forestry, green infrastructure, multi-benefit projects and environmental education. They possess significant experience in public-private stakeholder facilitation, planning and project development, and regional and state water policy strategy. TreePeople's staff of 70 professionals also specializes in social equity and community engagement to grow a greener, shadier and more water-secure region.

Acronyms in this Document

EWMP	Enhanced Watershed Management Program
FTBMI	Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
IRWM	Integrated Regional Water Management
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (Permit)
SCR	Santa Clara River
SCWP	Safe Clean Water Program
USCR	Upper Santa Clara River
WASC	Watershed Area Steering Committee



1. Watershed Area Description

a. The Santa Clara River

The Santa Clara River is fundamental to life in our area. It deserves our deepest respect, and its care is our united responsibility. The river is precious beyond description and is part of every living entity it has touched or touches - past, present and future.

It is the largest river system in southern California that remains in a natural state. As such, it is a reflection and constant reminder of the vast, natural open spaces that yet characterize the Santa Clara River Watershed Area. It is critical to survival: major aquifers are recharged through the river providing a significant source of water for multiple biomes of flora and fauna - including the hundreds of thousands of people who call the area home.

The river provides a source of pleasure for many, through recreation and engagement with nature along several miles of walking and biking trails. It is a source of community pride, with thousands of local volunteers supporting its care and maintenance every year.

[“Watershed Area” definition: In the Safe, Clean Water Program, our area is referred to as the Santa Clara River Watershed Area. However, this area may be more specifically defined as the upper Santa Clara River and watershed, to distinguish it from the lower portion of the river running through Ventura County. Our area’s north boundary, for purposes of the SCWP, is determined by the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and does not include the full length of tributaries running north to south, as well as communities such as Green Valley, the Lakes and Leona Valley. In general, references to the “Watershed Area” in this plan should be assumed to mean the upper portion of the river and areas within the purview of the SCWP and the SCR Watershed Area Steering Committee.](#)

b. Area Physical Characteristics - Water

The river originates in the northern slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains in north Los Angeles County, undulating and growing as it welcomes water from a community of contributing canyons. It flows through Tie Canyon, Aliso Canyon, Soledad Canyon, the Santa Clarita Valley, the Santa Clara River Valley, and the Oxnard Plain in Ventura County. In all, it traverses 84 miles until it ultimately enters the Pacific Ocean. The entire river covers 1,600 square miles of land. Approximately 40% of its watershed flows in Los Angeles County and 60% in Ventura County.

There are many natural and human-made hydrologic features that are part of the area and in most cases part of the upper Santa Clara River. These include but are not limited to Castaic Lake (formed by Castaic Dam on Castaic Creek); creeks flowing through San Francisquito, Bouquet, Mint, Agua Dulce, and Aliso

canyons; South Fork, Placerita Creek, Newhall Creek, Drinkwater Reservoir, Dry Canyon Reservoir, Quail Spring, Towsley Canyon and the [Los Angeles Aqueduct California State Water Project](#).

Surface water and *groundwater* share an important relationship in the area, especially regarding the SCWP. *Surface water* is usually the focus when considering water quality. *Groundwater* in the SCR Watershed Area is a critical component of water quantity; the Santa Clarita area draws half of its supply from groundwater, and rural communities depend significantly on groundwater drawn from private wells. These levels of reliance on groundwater are essentially unheard of in other SCWP Watershed Areas.

For monitoring water quality and other purposes, the river is organized in a series of eleven sections or “reaches,” beginning with Reach No. 1 near Ventura Harbor and moving east and north. The SCR Watershed Area includes Reaches 5, 6, 7 and 8, as noted on the map below.

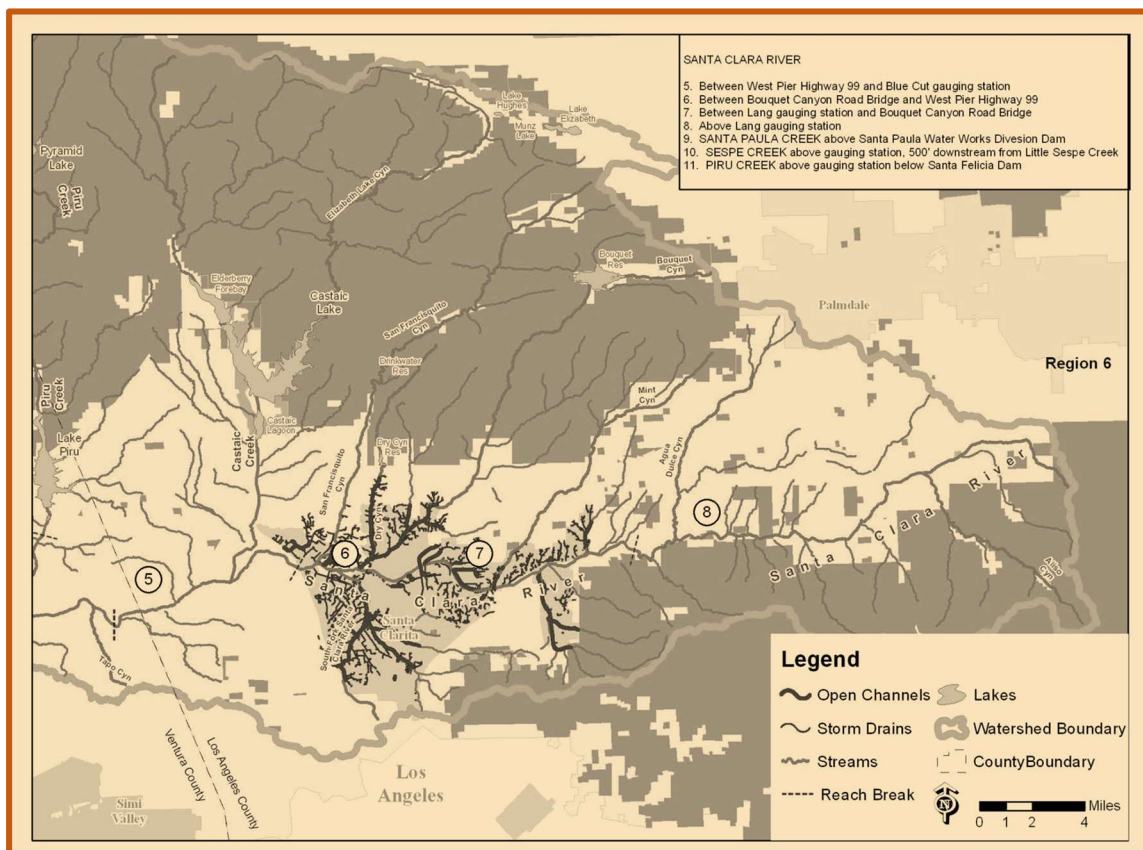


Figure 1 Upper Santa Clara River Watershed Management Area (MS4 Permit) Flow Schematic (State Water Resources Control Board)

Major groundwater basins in the area include the Saugus Formation, the Alluvial Aquifer in the western half of the Watershed Area, and Acton Valley in the east. Rainfall in open space and rural areas of the Watershed Area percolates deep into the ground and becomes groundwater - or it flows through canyons and tributaries to the upper Santa Clara River. By contrast, urbanized areas generally send stormwater through paved surfaces to storm drains and then to the river.

The Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District operates the Saugus and Valencia Water Reclamation Plants. Perennial flow can be found emanating from the discharge points of these plants in Reach 6 and provides a significant source of recharge for the river.

The Santa Clara River, because it is still largely in its natural state, is a primary source of feeding local groundwater - and the process can also be reciprocal. From where the river begins, it contributes to the groundwater beneath Acton in the east, then connects to the Alluvial Aquifer and indirectly with the Saugus Formation in the west. There, the Saugus Formation contributes water into the Alluvial Aquifer and can provide enough force to move water upward and into the Santa Clara River as it continues westward toward the ocean.

Water bodies deemed as impaired (polluted) by the CA State Water Resources Control Board include Bouquet Canyon Creek, Mint Canyon Creek, and the upper Santa Clara River, Reaches 5, 6 and 7.



Figure 2 The Watershed Area (tan), the Saugus and Alluvial Aquifer (gold), Acton Valley and groundwater beneath Acton (blue) and red lines indicate impaired waters. (SCWP Spatial Data Library)

Since 2001, hundreds of stormwater treatment devices have been installed in new and redeveloped areas as part of the stormwater mitigation plan requirements throughout both the city of Santa Clarita and unincorporated area. These devices vary from onsite and offsite engineered treatment, to biofiltration, and infiltration.

c. Area Physical Characteristics - Land

Landscape features of the Watershed Area are predominated by the stunning and inspiring expanses of open, protected areas. These include the Angeles National Forest (covering roughly half of the Watershed Area), Los Padres National Forest and corresponding ranges of the San Gabriel, Santa Susana, and Sierra Pelona Mountains - home to the area's highest peak of 5,222 ft-

Open space ~~protection-preservation~~ has been established in numerous canyons and properties such as Golden Valley Ranch Open Space, Haskell Canyon Open Space, Whitney Canyon Open Space, Taylor Property Open Space, Rivendale Park and Open Space, Wildwood Canyon Open Space, Gateway Ranch Open Space, Gates King Open Space, Elsmere Canyon Open Space, Quigley Canyon Open Space, East Walker Ranch Open Space, Rodda Open Space. -Open space in the upper Santa Clara River Watershed is estimated as high as 88%.

The City of Santa Clarita established, maintains and continues to grow the Open Space Preservation District, approximately 11,000 acres. Los Angeles County maintains numerous public parks, including Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park. Other entities engaged in land ~~protection-preservation~~ in the area include Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the Nature Conservancy, the Santa Clara River Conservancy and the Tataviam Land Trust.

At the same time, the Watershed Area is host to a diverse patchwork of landscape types, each composed of a unique suite of environmental forces – earthquakes, extreme yet episodic rainfall, steep slopes, frequent wildfire, and intensive land practices – which when they coincide can create significant amounts of sediment affecting the river.

The highest elevation areas of the Watershed Area are host to the densest vegetation cover (a mix of scrub/shrub and woodlands), receive the most rainfall, and are composed of the oldest, most erosion-resistant bedrock types. In contrast, the lowland and foothill areas, typically those within and surrounding the Santa Clara River Valley and Santa Clarita basin, are much drier, host a sparse vegetation cover (a mix of grassland, chaparral and scrub/shrub), and are composed of the youngest, weakest rock types.

From the River's estuary to the upper watershed, the Santa Clara River provides a diversity of habitats supporting 18 threatened or endangered species - among them riparian dependent bird species, terrestrial wildlife, anadromous fish and rare plants. There are many contrasting and complimentary habitat types that support these species such as coastal sage scrub, chaparral, grassland, riparian communities and oak and juniper woodlands.

The Watershed Area includes large campuses or managed parcels that should be noted. Examples include California Institute of the Arts, College of the Canyons, Six Flags Magic Mountain, Agua Dulce Airpark, multiple sites used for filming locations, and school district campuses.

d. Social Characteristics

Jurisdictions

A unique social diversity found in the upper Santa Clara River Watershed Area is the strong juxtaposition of both urban and rural populations. There is one municipality (Santa Clarita) which is a collective of four major communities (Valencia, Saugus, Newhall, and Canyon Country) that merged to create the city in 1987. It is the third-largest city in LA County, behind Los Angeles and Long Beach. By contrast, the remainder of Watershed Area is fully unincorporated, with services provided by Los Angeles County, and home to six well-defined communities classified as Census Designated Places: Acton, Agua Dulce, Castaic, Hasley Canyon, Stevenson Ranch and Val Verde.

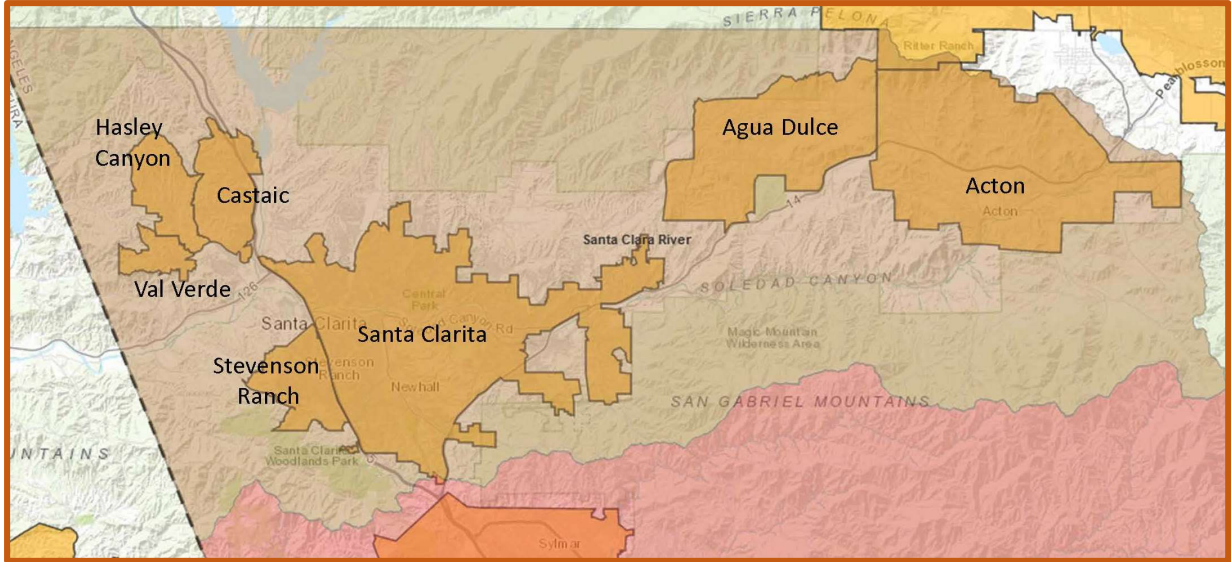


Figure 3 Watershed Area Cities / Census Designated Places (SCWP Spatial Data Library)

Disadvantaged and Underrepresented Communities

A key role played by the Watershed Coordinator is to engage and support disadvantaged and underrepresented communities in the Watershed Area in their participation in the SCWP. Therefore, this Plan looks at the demographics of the area, and ways in which these communities are identified.

Demographics: The population of the Watershed Area is more than 280,000. On average, 83% of residents are homeowners, and the median age is 41. The poverty rate is 7%. In Santa Clarita, young men aged 18-24 are the largest group living in poverty, while outside the city it is mature adults - mostly women - ages 45-64. Diversity in the area includes 57% white, 30% Hispanic, 9% Asian, 2% Black/African American, 1% Native American and 3% multi-racial or other ethnic identities. The following charts provide a breakdown by community. ([Sources: census.gov and DataUSA.io](#))

City/CDP	Population	Homeowners	Median Age	Poverty Rate	Largest Poverty Profile
Santa Clarita	<u>228,673</u>	70%	37	8%	Males <u>age 18-24</u>
Acton	<u>7,431</u>	92%	49	8%	Females <u>age 55-64</u>
Agua Dulce	3,742	93%	46	8%	Females <u>age 55-64</u>
Castaic	<u>18,937</u>	83%	37	4%	Females <u>age 45-54</u>
Hasley Canyon	1,145	93%	43	11%	Males <u>age 5 and under</u>
Stevenson Ranch	<u>20,178</u>	70%	41	5%	Males <u>age 55-64</u>
Val Verde	2,734	81%	34	4%	Males <u>age 55-64</u>

City/CDP	White	Hispanic	Asian	Multi-racial / Other	Black / African American	Native American
Santa Clarita	48%	34%	11%	4%	4%	0.3%
Acton	74%	21%	2%	2%	1%	0.4%
Agua Dulce	71%	23%	2%	1%	0%	2.8%
Castaic	54%	27%	10%	4%	4%	1.0%
Hasley Canyon	74%	22%		2%	2%	
Stevenson Ranch	51%	15%	24%	6%	3%	
Val Verde	27%	66%	3%	1%	2%	

Disadvantaged Community areas: the SCWP current guidelines state that census blocks with a median household income level that is 80% or less of the state level be considered “disadvantaged.” This definition is also consistent with the CA Department of Water Resources in their funding programs. The salmon-colored areas in the map below show these portions of the Watershed Area. They include the neighborhood surrounding the California Institute of the Arts, portions of Newhall, Canyon Country and Mint Canyon.

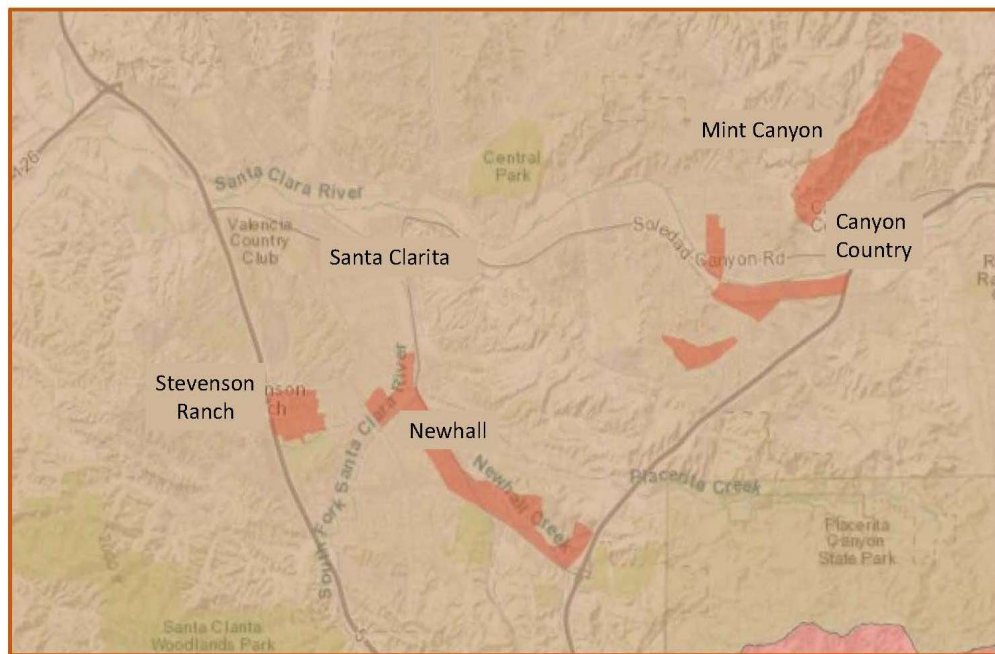


Figure 4 Disadvantaged Community Census Block areas (SCWP Spatial Data Library)

WaterTalks Program (discussed in the 6. Collaboration section, below): this program currently underway in the Watershed Area uses both the <80% MHI marker to define areas to be served, as well as other criteria for underrepresented communities - i.e., those without capacity and resources to develop infrastructure projects to meet local needs. The map below shows areas served by WaterTalks:

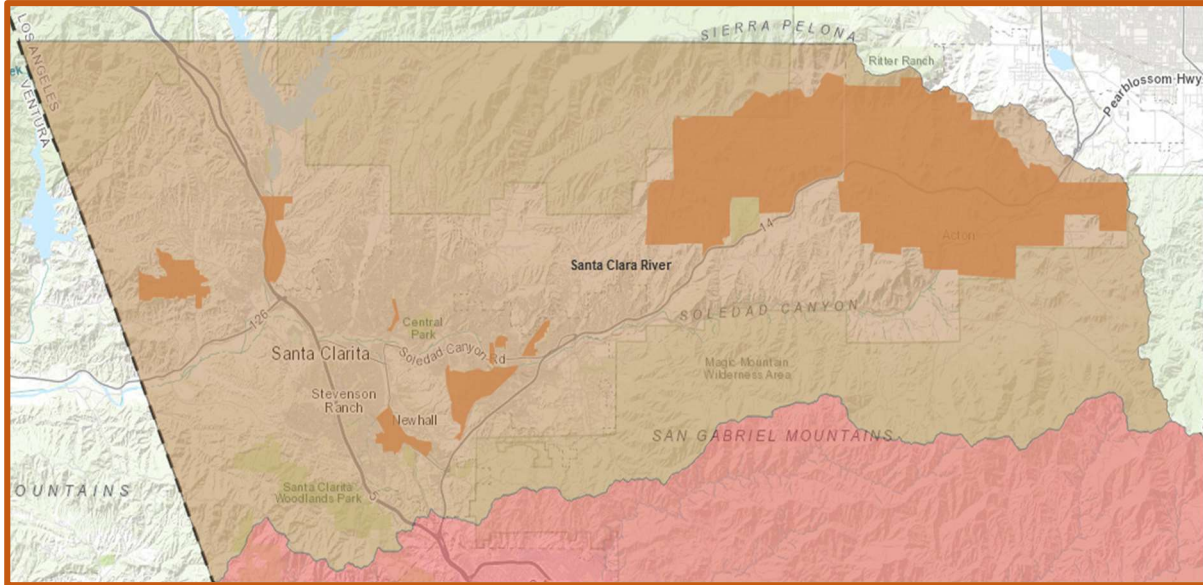


Figure 5 WaterTalks Communities / Prop 1 Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Program

Elected Office Districts

Following are districts for elected officials representing the Watershed Area. (Please note, this list contains best estimates and is subject to change.)

- United States Congressional District 25 (Mike Garcia)
- United States Congressional District 28 (Adam Schiff)
- California State Senate District 21 (Scott Wilk)
- California State Senate District 27 (Henry Stern)
- California Assembly Districts 36 (Tom Lackey)
- California Assembly Districts 38 (Suzette Martinez Valladares)
- LA County Supervisorial District 5 (Kathryn Barger)
- Santa Clarita City Council

California Native American Tribes

The ~~Santa Clara River~~ Watershed Area is home to several unceded villages, well-established for hundreds of years prior to 1769 when foreign missionaries and settlers began arriving. Today, the state of California recognizes multiple Native American Tribes active and with ancestral homeland in the Watershed Area, including Tataviam, Tongva and Chumash. (More information is found in 2. SCWP Context section, below).

Water Providers

Water supply in the Area is provided by Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency and Los Angeles County WaterWorks Districts 36 and 37. There are thousands of residents, especially in Acton and Agua Dulce on private wells and hauled water. They are their own water providers and are unique in the SCWP.

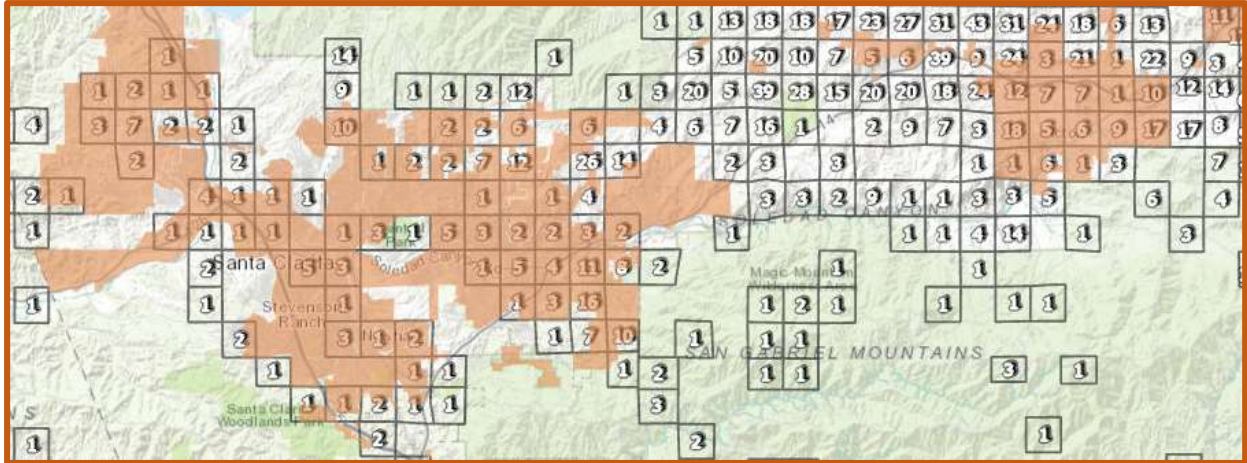


Figure 6 Water System Areas (tan areas) and Domestic Wells per Section (numeric blocks) - (CA Water Boards SAFER Program)

Campuses / School Districts

Education campuses can provide opportunities for stormwater capture, including green infrastructure. However, schools have a priority to serve children and young adults. In the Watershed Area, there are two or more post-secondary school campuses, six K-12 public school districts, and 15 private schools.

Faith-based Organizations

The Watershed Area as an array of faith-based organizations and places of worship. The Plan assumes engagement may include faith-based organizations, especially those with programs that bring members and community together around local issues.

Topics of Concern

Through our interviews and research, there emerged a variety of concerns for the Watershed Area that may provide opportunities for multi-benefit projects and/or funding partnerships:

- **Flooding:** street flooding, sometimes hazardous, has been reported and documented in both municipal and unincorporated parts of the Watershed Area, such as downtown Acton and Newhall.
- **Homeless Population:** This ongoing challenge has two major implications for water: first, the access that unhoused people have or don't have to water and second, the extent to which encampments may pose a threat to water quality in the river and tributaries.
- **RV Communities:** In the open spaces of the Area, especially near Acton, there are multiple RV campgrounds that attract users year-round. Multiple camps are positioned next to the river, including Thousand Trials, Cali-Lake, and KOA. They provide space for thousands of short and long-term users and rely on septic systems.

- **Traffic:** Major roadways serving the area include the Golden State Freeway (I-5), and the Antelope Valley Fwy (Hwy 14). Increasingly there are challenges travelling by car between the Watershed Area and Greater LA, and across the Santa Clarita Valley.
- **Water Security:** The amount and concentration of people using private wells in this Watershed Area is very high for the SCWP (Fig. 6, above). Not all wells produce, or they don't produce all the time based on seasonal, drought and other factors, requiring residents to haul water. There is also a repeatedly heard concern about continued urban development and whether there will be sufficient long-term water supply.
- **Wildfires:** Fire is a natural and sometimes necessary part of the biomes that make up the beautiful open spaces in the Watershed Area. The vegetation and long dry seasons create optimal conditions for fire – especially during periods of drought. Proper understanding of how to restore and care for open spaces can also help prevent and manage naturally occurring fires. However, when fires occur close to human population centers, significant stores of water are needed to protect life and properties.



2. Safe, Clean Water Program Context

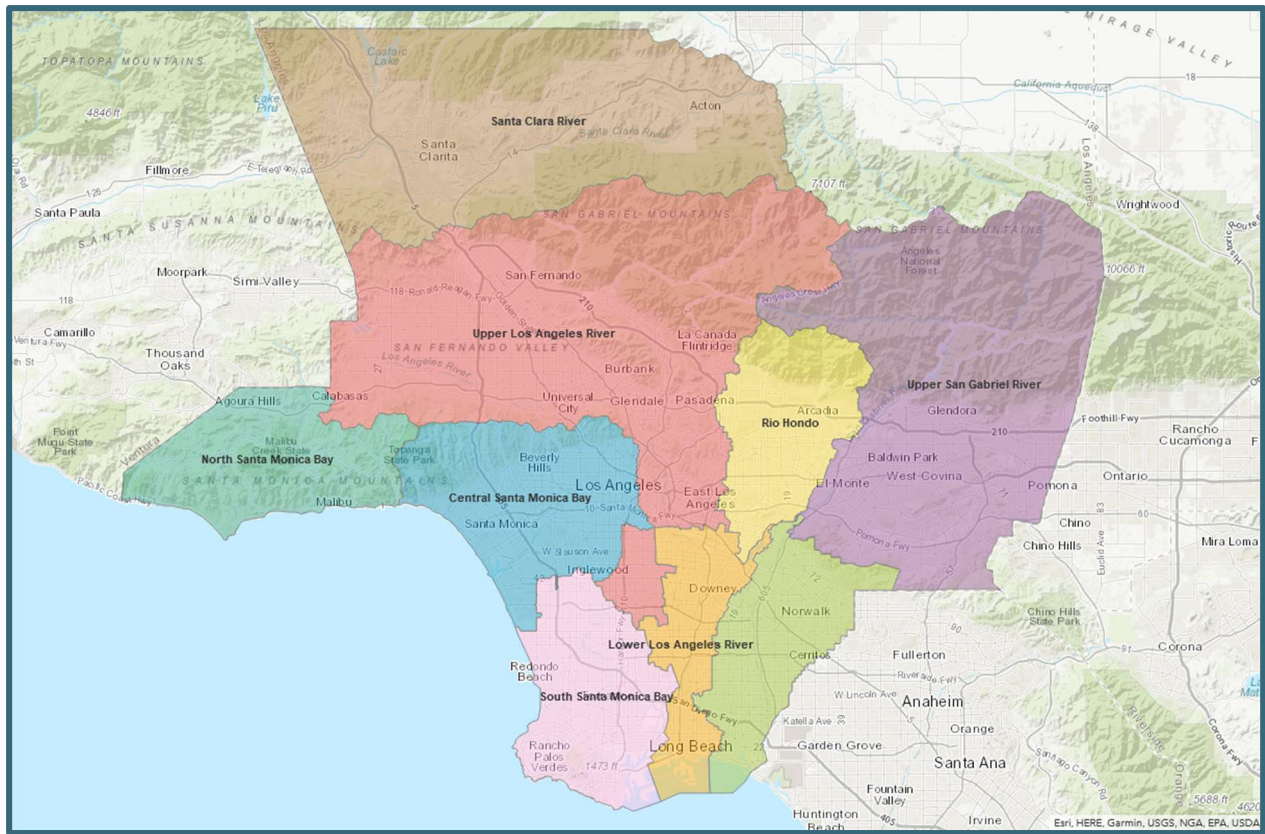


Figure 7 SCWP Watershed Areas (SCWP Digital Atlas)

It is important for the Watershed Coordinator to look at the **Santa Clara River** Watershed Area in context of the entire SCWP. Our contractual Scope of Work includes coordinating with other Watershed Areas - and doing so helps raise the upper Santa Clara River’s voice within the entire SCWP.

Watershed Coordination

One Coordinator (TreePeople) serves the SCWP Santa Clara River Watershed Area.

Funding

Annual Funding in the Santa Clara River Watershed Area (2020-21)	Amount
Regional Program	\$5.87M
Municipal Program (City of Santa Clarita)*	\$3.25M
Total:	\$9.12M

*LA County Public Works also has municipal funding for unincorporated areas.

Hydrologic

In the upper Santa Clara River Watershed Area, there is not significant overlap with other SCWP Watershed Areas the way it can be seen in Greater Los Angeles. There are no hydrologic connections with other watershed areas (see Physical Characteristics); the river flows east to west, where most of the water in Los Angeles flows from north to south. There is connection to the Santa Clara River Watershed flowing through Ventura County and that raises potential to coordinate periodically with interested parties such as the Lower Santa Clara River Watershed Committee.

MS4 Permit Partners

MS4 permit compliance for our Watershed Area is led by the Upper Santa Clara River Enhanced Watershed Management Program (EWMP) Group, which includes the City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County, and Los Angeles County Flood Control District. The area of responsibility for the EWMP is larger than the Santa Clara River Watershed Area but does not overlap with any other SCWP Watershed Area.

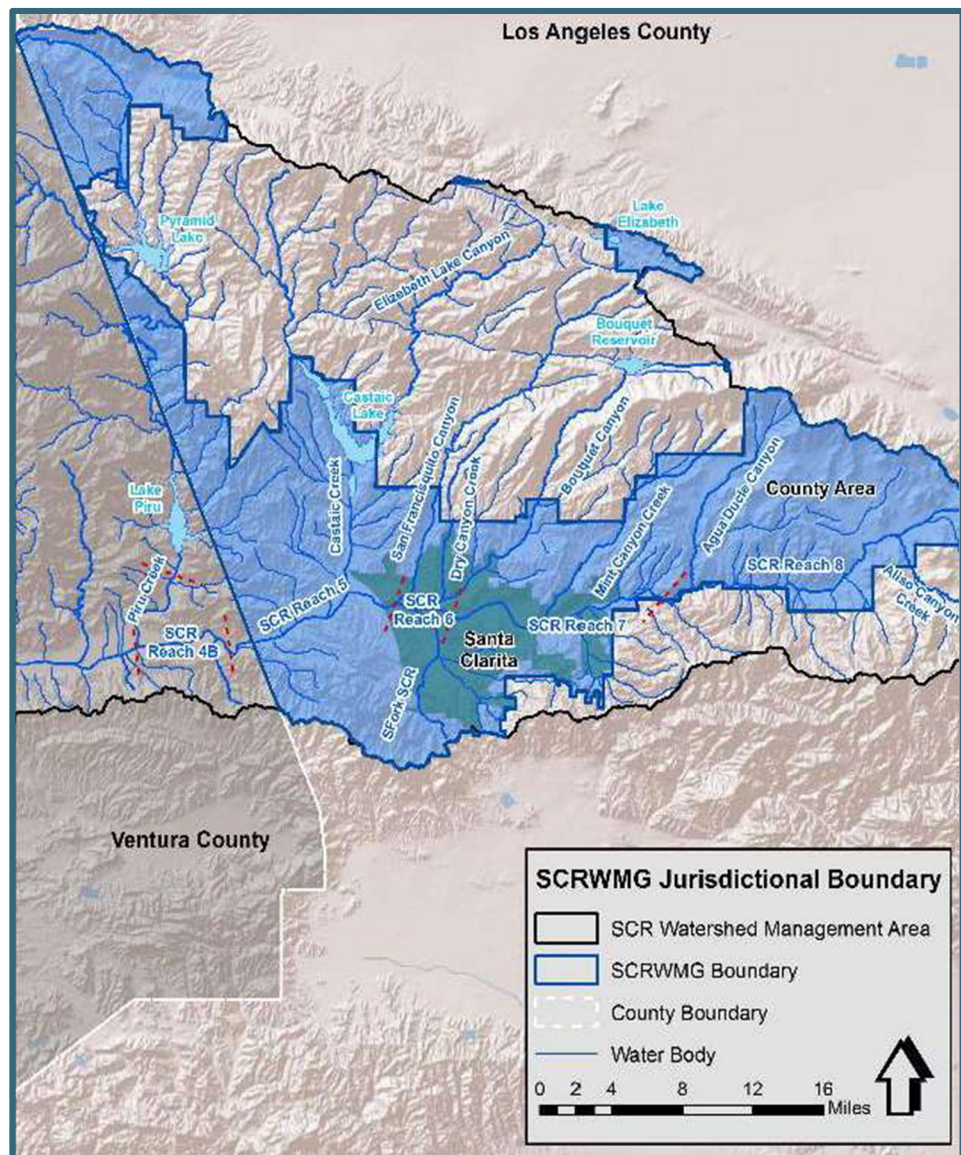


Figure 8 Upper Santa Clara EWMP Area (USC Watershed Management Group)

Supervisory and Elected Office Districts

The chart below shows instances where elected offices cover more than, or parts of, other SCWP watershed areas. (Please note, this chart contains our best estimates and is not yet fully confirmed using any geospatial information tools and is subject to change. The Watershed Coordinators have already identified the need to confirm districts and the overlap with SCWP watershed areas.)

District	Santa Clara River	Upper LA River	Rio Hondo	Upper San Gabriel River	North Santa Monica Bay
LA County Dist. 5 (Barger)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CA Senate Dist. 27 (Stern)	✓	✓			✓
CA Assembly Dist. 38 (Martinez Valladares)	✓	✓			
U.S. Congressional Dist. 28 (Schiff)	✓	✓			

Native American Ancestral Homelands

Because of the affiliation of Tataviam, Tongva and Chumash in our Watershed Area, there is essentially overlap with all other SCWP Watershed areas.

The Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI) affirms itself as the tribal community of Los Angeles City (San Fernando Valley), northern Los Angeles County (Santa Clarita and Antelope valleys) and eastern Ventura County (Simi Valley). Tribal Citizens are descendants of villages throughout the San Fernando, Simi, Santa Clarita, and Antelope valleys, and parts of the Angeles National Forest. The territory of the FTBMI is based upon descendancy from villages for which every tribal citizen is affiliated. Every Tribal Citizen has multiple tribal ethnicities from neighboring indigenous regional groups, such as Tataviam, Chumash, Vanyume, Serrano, and Pipimaram. (see Fig. 9 below)

Information provided to the California Native American Heritage Commission Digital Atlas by local tribal councils also shows overlap of ancestral lands with other California Native American Tribes in the Watershed Area, including but not limited to the San Fernando Band of Mission Indians, Gabrielino/Tongva Nation of the Greater Los Angeles Basin and the Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians.

Through the Atlas, overlap is noted in the southwest parts of the SCR Watershed Area (Chumash) and southeast (Tongva). Because of the long, complex and heartbreaking history of Native Americans in the Los Angeles region, there is understandably a variety of ways in which ancestral homelands are expressed and recognized today.



Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians Historical Tribal Ancestral Territory

Tribal boundary depicted is based on the villages from which registered Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians' (FTBMI) tribal citizens descend. Due to the complex kinship and social exchange networks of our ancestors, the tribal boundary does not include all of the abundant locations associated with our peoples. The yellow shaded area depicts tribal lands that are significant to the FTBMI, but are culturally shared with neighboring Tribal governments due to the natural mobility of ancestral and contemporary FTBMI people.



Figure 9 FTBMI Historical Tribal Ancestral Territory (FTBMI)

3. Interested Parties

An essential and early activity for Watershed Coordination is the identification of interested parties who will form the foundation of community outreach and engagement. TreePeople has identified an initial “core group” of parties known or assumed to have interest in the SCWP; from these relationships we will identify additional entities with whom to engage. This list is not exhaustive and is subject to change as the engagement process moves forward.

Public Sector	Organizations
LA County Flood Control District LA County Stormwater Division <u>Public Works</u> LA County Sanitation Districts LA County Waterworks Districts Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Santa Clarita Stormwater Compliance Santa Clarita Public Works Santa Clarita Community Development Santa Clarita Recreation & Community Services Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency Santa Clarita Valley GSA US Forest Service / Angeles National Forest	Chamber of Commerce Community Hiking Club Economic Development Corporation Friends of the Santa Clara River Santa Clara River Conservancy Santa Clara River Watershed Santa Clarita Community Task Force on Homelessness Santa Clarita Organizing for People and the Environment Sierra Club St. Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Foundation The Nature Conservancy Valley Industry Association

Communities	Tribes
Acton Town Council Agua Dulce Town Council Castaic <u>Area</u> Town Council Lakes Town Council Southern Oaks HOA Stevenson Ranch HOA Val Verde Civic Association Westridge Valencia HOA	Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians Gabrielino/Tongva Nation of the Greater Los Angeles Basin San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

4. Vision for Success

This Plan provides a Vision for Success and methods for evaluating the Vision’s effectiveness. These serve two purposes: (1) support the District and WASC in assessing the Watershed Coordinators and (2) help communicate the Watershed Coordinator’s intentions and focus to the public and relevant agencies. This vision can be amended or refocused each year when the Plan is updated, so it strives to be visionary but also focused in the near-term. TreePeople shapes this Vision from the standpoint of the Watershed Area as a whole, and of our role as Watershed Coordinator.

Vision for the Watershed Area

TreePeople’s Vision for our work in the [upper](#) Santa Clara River Watershed Area is built around one central theme:

***It’s all about the river –
and projects that support the river.***

The Santa Clara River, and all it represents, provides a through-line for the three major goals of the SCWP: Water Quality, Water Supply and Community Benefit.

Water Quality	<i>The river and its major tributaries are a primary focus of water quality measures that our watershed area must meet if we are to provide safe, clean water now and for future generations.</i>
Water Supply	<i>Local aquifers are recharged through the river and its tributaries, and in turn provide the area with resilience in an age of major environment change.</i>
Community Benefit	<i>Access to the river and open spaces for all people is a marker of a diverse, equitable and just community.</i>

Vision for Watershed Coordination

TreePeople’s Vision for Successful Watershed Coordination considers certain overarching themes to help guide our process:

- Honor the spirit of “open spaces” in the identification and development of projects, including use of nature-based solutions and green infrastructure.
- Support a reasonable and appropriate balance between urban and unincorporated communities in the use of Coordinator services and SCWP resources.
- Work toward a shift in practice, so community input is involved as close to the point of project inception as possible, ***building a sense of community project ownership.***
- Raise awareness of and between community voices, the area’s public sector and the SCWP.
- Remember that ***it’s all about the river and the projects that support the river.***

We've considered the distinct roles the Watershed Coordinator should play, especially in the first year of service:

- **Project Guide:** TreePeople sees, as a key role of service, to identify and move community-based project concepts to the point where they can be submitted for the Technical Resources Program. In Year One, this includes building a base of potential project applicants, helping to evaluate projects in the context of the SCWP, and many activities unique to each project.
- **Connector:** The Watershed Coordinator will help connect project advocates with a project applicant willing to lead and maintain the project if constructed, as well as connecting with the public agencies potentially affected by a project's scope and location.
- **Educator:** The Watershed Coordinator will educate audiences connected to specific projects, including understanding SCWP goals and resources, sharing knowledge of green infrastructure and other nature-based solutions, and the myriad steps involved in project development.

Priorities in Year One

There are countless ways in which a Watershed Coordinator can support activities in the Area, but to be effective, it's important to establish parameters and priorities as to how to use time and resources as efficiently as possible. It's also important to recognize that *Year One of the program will be a time of learning about how the Watershed Coordination program works and where it can be most impactful.*

We therefore have identified the following ways to prioritize activities, especially in Year One.

Role	More likely to be prioritized	Less likely to be prioritized
Project Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating matrices of potential projects and project sponsors. - Providing guidance to project sponsors <u>applicants</u> on meaningful community engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting outreach or collecting signatures for individual projects. - Serving as a project sponsor <u>applicant</u> or partner.
Connector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building initial relationships with core interested parties. - Connecting project sponsors <u>applicants</u> and appropriate resources. - Gathering data on underrepresented, disadvantaged and tribal community needs for WASC and project use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad-based outreach, such as tabling at events.
Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educating interested parties as it relates to specific new projects, especially with underrepresented, disadvantaged and tribal communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivering education about projects already submitted to the SCWP through July 2021, or broad-based education about SCWP.

5. Strategies & Evaluation Measures

To further define the plan’s Vision of Success, we provide strategies, and how success can be measured. Focus is given to the following five areas, as called for in the Watershed Coordinator Scope of Work.

In these strategies, we carry the vision forward by **keeping a focus on project development**; each strategy draws upon the previous one, giving us a sequential process to follow toward the desired outcome: *projects that support the river.*

1. Engage municipalities, community groups, and other interested parties within the SCR Watershed Area.

Strategy	Build diverse relationships that support project identification and ongoing coordination.
Activities	Create a matrix of interested parties drawing from the public sector, community and tribal leaders and NGOs; establish initial contact with interested parties; host and/or attend group and 1-on-1 meetings to connect with these parties; identify any potential for a coalition to support engagement and project ideas.
Measures	Matrix of interested parties, # of events and meetings.

2. Develop projects to be considered for Stormwater Investment Plans.

Strategy	Draw from interest ed -party relationships in #1 (above) to identify projects that serve community needs and SCWP goals.
Activities	Identify community needs through research and interviews; conceptualize projects and/or collect known project ideas from the EWMP, WaterTalks and other plans or assessments; identify potential project sponsors.
Measures	Report of community findings; matrix of potential projects; matrix of project sponsors; # of project concepts.

3. Identify and ensure the involvement of members of disadvantaged and underrepresented communities in the watershed area.

Strategy	Focus community involvement on project development as identified in #2 (above).
Activities	Attend existing meetings (Town Councils, HOAs, NGOs) to discuss local projects; shape meeting content based on individual projects; walk audiences through the project development process; bring project designers and engineers together with community members.
Measures	Meeting content outlines and materials; # of meetings; meeting reports.

4. Identify educational programming that elevates awareness of water management, ecological and community issues to support shared goals.

Strategy	Leverage discussions in #3 (above) to clarify educational needs that support understanding of how projects support shared goals.
Activities	Identify educational needs throughout the series of meetings from #3; research and/or create educational materials and tools as needed. <u>Provide training or guidelines to project applicants on engagement best-practices, including outreach costs added to project budgets, partnering with a local entity to help engage before, during and between project phases and conflict resolution with the community.</u>
Measures	Report of educational needs findings; educational materials created and/or used.

5. Provide transparency through information sharing and promoting a collaborative agenda.

Strategy	Share information through a regular public reporting structure.
Activities	Prepare monthly updates, quarterly and annual reports to the WASC; share reports with interested parties as appropriate.
Measures	Attend WASC meetings, updates, reports

6. Collaboration

In this Plan, we consider collaborations across watershed area boundaries and/or with other Watershed Coordinators. The following list of topics and programs is not exhaustive, but provides our awareness of what may be important in Year One, especially given the timing of other planning and project development efforts.

IRWM / EMWP Group

By working with the WaterTalks program, we will coordinate efforts with the Upper Santa Clara River IRWM Region; we assume the Regional Water Management Group will be active in 2022, preparing for Round 2 IRWM funding from DWR. At the same time, EWMP activities and projects can be integral to the success of the SCWP, and TreePeople anticipates reviewing the EWMP plans and reports to explore projects to support Tribes and underrepresented and disadvantaged communities.

LA County Water Plan

TreePeople, along with other environmental justice organizations with a nexus to water, is participating in the collaborative development of the Los Angeles County Water Plan (CWP). TreePeople is involved in providing input to the development of the CWP to bring forth integrated programs and projects that generate innovative solutions to identified key water management challenges through Environmental Justice listening sessions carried out by Los Angeles County Public Works.

Regional and Rural Edition of the Countywide Parks Needs Assessment

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation is conducting a comprehensive study to understand and document the need for regional facilities like beaches and lakes, natural areas and open spaces, regional parks, and trails, and the park needs of the rural parts of the County. TreePeople will meet with County Parks in August to determine how we support each other's efforts.

Tribal Engagement

As explained in the SCWP Context section above, the affiliation of Tataviam, Tongva and Chumash in our Watershed Area calls for working with other Watershed Coordinators on engaging Tribal Councils and communities across the SCWP region.

SCWP Watershed Coordinators

TreePeople will collaborate with the other SCWP Watershed Coordinators to help ensure consistency in program implementation and to inform each other of effective efforts, outreach, and communication approaches. This collaboration will occur through monthly meetings with all the Watershed Coordinators where best practices are shared and opportunities for efficiencies explored.

WaterTalks

For Year One of service, TreePeople recognizes a unique opportunity through the end of 2022 to coordinate with the Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program, funded by California Proposition 1 through Dept of Water Resources and the Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWM).

The program, known as WaterTalks in LA and Ventura County, parallels much of the SCWP. WaterTalks engages disadvantaged, tribal and underrepresented communities to determine local water-related needs and then develops programs and infrastructure projects to address these needs. A formal needs assessment is wrapping up in 2021, and project development will be the focus in 2022 - which is the last year of the program. TreePeople is deeply involved in the program in the Greater LA County area and anticipates having significant involvement in the Upper Santa Clara River IRWM Region.

It is likely that WaterTalks will bring technical resources (planning and engineering) to the Watershed Area to help develop projects and ready them for both the SCWP and IRWM application processes in 2022. Simply put, by working with the WaterTalks program, we can develop more projects for the July 2022 project cycle than we would with current resources.

7. Resources

Following are some of the online resources used in preparing the Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan:

- SCWP website and Digital Spatial Library
- Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management
- Upper Santa Clara River Integrated Regional Water Management
- WaterTalks.la / Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Program
- Groundwater Exchange.org / Santa Clara River Valley – Santa Clara River Valley East
- Santa Clarita Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency
- Researchgate.net / Watershed Modeling for the Santa Clara River in Southern California
- California State Water Resources Control Board / SAFER Program
- Santa Clara River.org
- Santa-Clarita.com
- Santa Clara River Watershed Wildlands Report
- Santa Clarita Community Task Force on Homelessness
- DataUSA.io
- The Signal / Santa Clarita Valley

- End Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (DRAFT) -

TreePeople

12601 Mulholland Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Contact: Peter Massey | petermassey@treepeople.org