



SECTION 4.0 - WVCV STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT, GOVERNANCE, AND COORDINATION

This section addresses stakeholder involvement, the governance structure and process, and coordination in the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WVCV) IRWM Region and with neighboring regions.

4.1 Overview

The IRWM Program in Ventura County, governed by the WVCV, has been very successful. A number of factors contribute to this success, including the long history of collaboration among local entities addressing water management challenges, the diverse and engaged nature of stakeholders currently working together, and the watershed focus of the IRWM Program. Water, sanitation and floodplain managers, planners, environmental and agricultural interests, and other community groups in Ventura County have worked collaboratively over the past 40 years to manage water and natural resources, long before the promulgation of IRWM legislation.

The WVCV was formed in 2006 to serve as the regional water management group (RWMG) responsible for development and implementation of the IRWM Plan and overseeing the IRWM Program in Ventura County. The WVCV includes a broad spectrum of stakeholders representing water resource management interests and concerns. The WVCV IRWM Program, and preparation of the IRWM Plan Update, are collaborative efforts involving many agencies and organizations with a vested interest in improving water supply, water quality, flood management, recreation, and ecosystems within Ventura County.

Also contributing to the success of the WVCV IRWM Program is the somewhat informal and consensus-driven nature of the group and the high level of stakeholder support and engagement. Active stakeholders are primarily those individuals most knowledgeable about their area of expertise and related needs and also those most involved in design and implementation of projects and programs.

The stakeholder process, governance, and coordination process were built on this strong foundation of collaboration and consensus and are closely linked and are therefore addressed in the same section.

4.2 Stakeholder Identification and Engagement

A “stakeholder” as defined by the 2010 Proposition 84 IRWM Guidelines refers to “an individual, group, coalition, agency or others who are involved in, affected by, or have an interest in the implementation of a specific program or project.” There are many stakeholders actively engaged in IRWM activities in the Region focused primarily at the individual watershed level. WVCV is the primary group of stakeholders that come together to address solutions to regional and watershed-based challenges as part of the IRWM Program. The members of WVCV are dedicated to addressing common objectives and resolving local water challenges in a collaborative, cost-effective manner.



4.2.1 Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County

The Regional Water Management Group for the IRWM Region is the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WCVC). The WCVC, formed in 2006, is comprised of most of the entities in the Region which have statutory authority over water management as well as many other entities with direct responsibility for water, wastewater, or resource management. It is a large, inclusive group, and decisions are made by consensus. See Table 4-1 for a list of participating entities. The WCVC IRWM Region was formally accepted by DWR in 2009 as part of the Proposition 84 Region Acceptance Process.

The WCVC has 5 committees (general membership, the steering committee and three watershed committees), which are engaged in a variety of local planning efforts including development of the updated Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP), implementation of integrated projects identified in the IRWMP and development of future plans and project ideas (for Proposition 84 and other sources of funding) to address the goals in the WCVC IRWM Plan. WCVC general membership and steering committee meet two to six times per year, while the individual watershed committees meet eight to twelve times per year depending on the need. See Appendix F for a copy of the Charter and Appendix E for a copy of the MOU which further describe the structure of WCVC.

There is a fee structure in place to fund ongoing planning efforts of the WCVC, which includes 21 member organizations (Cities, water and sanitation agencies, County entities, etc). Non-governmental agencies are not required to provide funding support, though they receive the same benefits of participation as those providing the funding.

There is no particular membership requirement, and the level of involvement of participants varies depending on their role or interest in the process. Some participants follow activities of the group through email communications and the website, while others come to every meeting and are engaged in many aspects of the process of IRWM planning and implementation in the Region.

4.2.2 How Stakeholders are Identified and Included

As previously mentioned, prior to establishment of the WCVC IRWM program, there were already groups of stakeholders working together to address water management issues and collaborate on solutions. After passage of Proposition 50, these same stakeholders, as well as additional entities, participated in two local groups focused on developing IRWM Plans: the Calleguas Creek Steering Committee and the Ventura Countywide Integrated Regional Water Management Group. In 2006, at the request of the Department of Water Resources (DWR), and in order to be eligible to receive Proposition 50 Implementation Grant funding, these two groups merged. Since the establishment of the WCVC, the number and variety of stakeholders has continued to expand.

Most stakeholders become involved in the WCVC at the watershed level. Each of the three major watersheds has a watershed committee which focuses on the unique needs and characteristics of that watershed and its stakeholders. Stakeholders also participate in regional efforts and tend to focus on topics of interest to them such as water use efficiency, drought planning, water recycling, habitat restoration, or flood management. Diverse points of view are considered and represented in



the decision-making process, and the entire Region benefits from the specific areas of expertise and unique viewpoints and contributions that each member brings to the process.

As part of the WCVC IRWM program, stakeholders collaborate through sharing information, identifying goals and objectives, monitoring progress, identifying and implementing projects, discussing funding alternatives, and assessing future needs. It is, in fact, the stakeholders themselves that are responsible for the successful implementation of the WCVC IRWM Region's programs and projects.

For the most part, the committees that comprise the WCVC are informal, though they have each adopted their own approach to decision-making, election of officers, and other procedures. Please see the watershed specific sections for further detail about each of the watershed committees described briefly below.

Each watershed in the County is unique and attracts a different mix of stakeholders. The primary means of outreach to new participants is through public events, the website, contacts from new organizations and entities provided by existing stakeholders, and contacting local organizations to get their representatives involved (a recent example has been a representative from the League of Women Voters attending committee meetings). Diverse points of view are represented in discussions at these meetings, as well as during the development of goals and objectives, performance measures, and potential implementation programs and projects. Some topics with particularly diverse viewpoints include: land use policies, mechanisms to balance natural resources with urban and agricultural demands, approaches to address water quality degradation, and strategies/projects to meet increasing demands for new supplies.

Calleguas Creek Steering Committee

Started in 1996, the Calleguas Creek Steering Committee (CCSC) was first formed to develop the Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan (WMP) and work with local stakeholders to address critical water quality challenges. The CCSC is a comprehensive, stakeholder-driven group that addresses resource management and protection for the 341-square mile Calleguas Creek Watershed in southeastern Ventura County. Watershed stakeholders initiated the WMP in response to a clear need to work cooperatively and responsibly to develop a comprehensive plan which would guarantee the long-term health of natural resources in the Watershed. The first phase of the CCSC efforts included the development of action recommendations and technical tools to address coordinated environmental and resource management by public agencies and private sector participants. The next phase focused on how responsible parties in the Watershed could act collectively to address significant water quality improvements and meet the mandatory standards of the Federal Clean Water Act and California Porter-Cologne Act. Subsequently the group has worked together to develop and implement solutions to water quality challenges, develop integrated, multi-benefit projects identified in the IRWM Plan, and coordinate responses to regulatory requirements affecting local stakeholder entities.

The CCSC meets as necessary for action items and to allow discussion of issues facing the Watershed, including those of the IRWMP. See further discussion in the watershed specific section (Appendix A). The CCSC meetings are open to the public and all other interested parties.



Lower Santa Clara River Watershed Committee (Ventura County)

In July 2006, a stakeholder group was formed to focus on long-term watershed management in the areas along the lower Santa Clara River Watershed. The lower Santa Clara River Watershed Committee (SCRWC) was formed as part of the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WCVC). The lower SCRWC coordinates closely with the upper Santa Clara River Watershed IRWM stakeholder group.

The SCRWC has focused its efforts on developing objectives and future project concepts that will address water issues and problems in the Watershed. Attendance at these meetings has included more than 30 people representing State and Federal agencies (such as Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board) and local water agencies, Cities, the local Resource Conservation District, U.C. Cooperative Extension, the County Board of Supervisors, and public interest and environmental groups (such as the Nature Conservancy, Friends of the Santa Clara River). Interested parties from Los Angeles County such as the City of Santa Clarita, Castaic Lake Water Agency, Newhall Land and Farming, County Sanitation Districts, and Los Angeles County Public Works Agency are also participating in the SCRWC meetings.

SCRWC meetings are typically held every other month. Representatives of the upper Santa Clara River IRWM group frequently attend these meetings. These meetings are open to the public and all other interested parties.

Ventura River Watershed Council

The Ventura River Watershed Council was formed in May of 2006 and meets every four to six weeks. The Council is comprised of a diverse group of interests within the Watershed and has grown substantially in recent years. In 2011, a Watershed Coordinator was hired with grant and local funding to develop a watershed management plan, expand the stakeholder group, enhance outreach to the public, and implement more comprehensive strategies for watershed management. Attendance at these meetings typically includes more than 40 people representing diverse interests. The Council now has its own leadership group and a charter. The Council is the stakeholder group in the Ventura River Watershed guiding development and implementation of the IRWMP.

The Coordinator has successfully expanded the stakeholder group including the addition of more agricultural and business interests, homeless advocates, landowners, and neighborhood groups. Watershed University Ventura River, held in 2010, generated tremendous new interest in the Watershed which facilitated the expansion of the Council. In addition, the Council now has its own charter, goals, website, database, and document library. Several times a year the Council holds evening meetings to facilitate participation of the public. The Council's meetings are open to the public and all other interested parties.



4.2.3 Watersheds Coalition Members and Participants (RWMG)

The following table includes a list of stakeholders in the WCVC, and their role in the planning process.

Table 4-1

Agency or Organization	Participated in IRWM Plan Development	Adopted IRWMP or Provided Letter of Support	Other Levels of Participation ¹
Cities			
City of Camarillo	✓	✓	
City of Fillmore	✓	✓	
City of Moorpark – water service provided by County of Ventura Waterworks District #1	✓	✓	
City of Ojai –water service provided by Golden State Water	✓	✓	
City of Oxnard	✓	✓	
City of Santa Paula	✓	✓	
City of Port Hueneme	✓	✓	
City of Simi Valley	✓	✓	
City of Thousand Oaks	✓	✓	
City of Ventura (San Buenaventura)	✓	✓	
Wholesale Water Agencies			
Calleguas Municipal Water District	✓	✓	
Casitas Municipal Water District	✓	✓	
United Water Conservation District	✓	✓	
Major Retail Water Agencies²			
Camrosa Water District	✓	✓	
Meiners Oaks County Water District			✓
Ventura River County Water District			✓
Pleasant Valley Mutual Water Company			✓
Ventura County Waterworks District #1 - Moorpark	✓	✓	
Ventura County Waterworks District #8 – Simi Valley	✓	✓	
Golden State Water Company	✓	✓	
Fillmore Irrigation Company	✓		

¹ Other levels of participation including but not limited to receiving WCVC emails, coordination of IRWM information, presentations, meetings.

² There are more than 160 smaller water purveyors, primarily mutual water companies, which are not listed.



Agency or Organization	Participated in IRWM Plan Development	Adopted IRWMP or Provided Letter of Support	Other Levels of Participation ¹
Channel Islands Beach Community Services District			✓
County Agencies			
Ventura County Public Works Agency	✓	✓	
Ventura County Executive Office	✓		
Ventura County Resource Management Agency	✓		
Ventura County Watershed Protection District	✓	✓	
Ventura County Board of Supervisors	✓	✓	
Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner			✓
Environmental Stewardship Organizations			
Friends of the Santa Clara River	✓	✓	
Matilija Coalition	✓		
Ventura County Resource Conservation District	✓	✓	
California Wildlife Conservation Board			✓
California Native Plant Society			✓
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy	✓	✓	
Ventura Hillside Conservancy			✓
The Nature Conservancy	✓	✓	
Wetlands Recovery Project	✓		
Trust for Public Land		✓	
Surfrider Foundation	✓	✓	
Ventura Coastkeeper			✓
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper	✓		
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	✓		
Sierra Club – Ventura Chapter			
State, Federal, and Regional Agencies and Universities			
Regional Water Quality Control Board – Los Angeles Region	✓		
California Coastal Commission			✓
California Coastal Conservancy	✓		
U.C. Cooperative Extension – Farm Advisor	✓		
University of California – Santa Barbara	✓		
California State University – Channel Islands			✓
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	✓		
California Department of Water Resources	✓		
Southern California Assoc. of Governments			✓
California Department of Parks and Recreation	✓		
U.S. Forest Service – Los Padres National Forest	✓		
Natural Resources Conservation Service	✓		
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	✓		
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency			✓
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation			✓
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	✓		



Agency or Organization	Participated in IRWM Plan Development	Adopted IRWMP or Provided Letter of Support	Other Levels of Participation ¹
Naval Base Ventura County			✓
Wastewater Agencies			
Ojai Valley Sanitary District	✓	✓	
Camarillo Sanitary District	✓	✓	
Saticoy Sanitary District	✓	✓	
Ventura Regional Sanitation District	✓	✓	
Groundwater Basin Management Authorities			
Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency – per California Water Code	✓	✓	
Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency – per California Water Code	✓	✓	
Santa Paula Basin Pumpers Association – court adjudicated	✓		
City of Fillmore/United Water Conservation District – groundwater managers of Fillmore and Piru Groundwater Basins per AB 3030 provisions	✓		
Community Organizations and Recreational Interests			
Association of Water Agencies of Ventura County	✓		
Santa Monica Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority	✓		
Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District			✓
Pleasant Valley Park and Recreation District			✓
Conejo Recreation and Parks District	✓		
League of Women Voters			✓
Flood Management Agencies			
Ventura County Watershed Protection District	✓	✓	
Native American Tribes			
Individual members of various bands of the Chumash Tribe and Wishtoyo Foundation			✓
Agricultural and Business Groups			
Farm Bureau of Ventura County	✓		
Building Industry Association			✓
Ventura County Economic Development Association			✓
Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business			✓
Limoneira Ranch			

Other Potential Participants

- Neighborhood councils, social justice organizations, property owner groups



4.2.4 Involvement of Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) and Native American Tribes

Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)

In the 2006 IRWM Plan, very few areas meeting the definition of Disadvantaged Communities (80% of the households in a census tract having incomes below the statewide Median Household Income) were identified in the Region. Due to changing economic conditions, many Ventura County residents, as in other regions of California, have experienced either unemployment or a drop in income. Based on the most recent American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (2007-11), there are more census tracts in Ventura County that have a concentration of residents with income levels below the threshold of 80 percent of the median household income (\$49,305) than there were a few years ago. These areas now qualify as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs). Residents in some of these areas are served by small, rural water companies (mutual water companies) that lack the staff and resources to address some of the needs of these areas (i.e. adequate fire flow capacity). The WCVC and individual water agencies have reached out to representatives of the small water companies and residents in DAC areas to discuss water supply, quality and sanitation issues, and identify potential sources of assistance.

Native American Tribes

There are several Native American tribes represented in Ventura County including the Chumash, Barbareno and Ventureno Indians. There has been ongoing outreach to tribal interests throughout the IRWM planning process beginning in 2005. The Native American Heritage Commission was contacted to confirm the appropriate contacts for further outreach. Local tribal interests are loosely organized and consist primarily of individuals. These individuals are included in the outreach e-mails and periodically attend meetings. WCVC staff have met with these individuals to determine their primary interests and cultural values and preferences. In particular, they strongly value preservation of the ecosystems and species (i.e., California Steelhead trout populations) which sustained indigenous tribes for centuries. Other stakeholders share this value which has been reflected in the habitat goal, as well as a variety of restoration projects proposed and/or implemented in the Region.

4.2.5 Other Stakeholder Groups

In addition to the WCVC watershed committees, there are a number of other ongoing projects and programs (related to IRWM Plan goals) within Ventura County with independent stakeholder groups. The WCVC IRWM Program collaborates with these groups. See partial list in the table below:

Table 4-2

Other Stakeholder Groups Cooperating with WVC*

Watershed or Area Covered	Name of Group
Calleguas Creek Watershed	TMDL Stakeholders’ group
	Las Posas Basin Users group
	Greenway/Trails group
	Municipal water purveyors group
Santa Clara River Watershed	Coastal Conservancy – Santa Clara River Parkway Project
	Ventura County Watershed Protection District/Los Angeles County Public Works/U. S. Army Corps Feasibility Study on the Santa Clara River
	Friends of the Santa Clara River
	Santa Paula Creek Committee
	Trustee Council
Ventura River Watershed	Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project Design and Oversight Committee
	Friends of the Ventura River
	Algae TMDL parties stakeholder advisory group
	Habitat Conservation Plan Advisory Committee
	Ojai Valley Green
Regional or Countywide	Ventura County Stormwater Management Group
	Association of Water Agencies of Ventura County and Channel Counties Water Utilities Association
	Farm Bureau of Ventura County – Ventura County Agricultural Irrigated Lands Group
	City County Planning Association
	Ventura County Natural Floodplain Management Group
	Regional Water Use Efficiency group
	Wetlands Recovery Task Force
	Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency
League of Women Voters Water Committee	

* This is only a partial list of related stakeholder groups

4.2.6 How Stakeholders Participate in Selecting and Implementing Plan Goals and Resource Management Strategies

Successful implementation of any IRWM Plan depends on engaged and involved stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, representing all aspects of water resource management. Local stakeholders should participate in developing the IRWM Plan by helping to identify goals, resource management strategies, implementation programs and projects, and should also participate in ongoing Plan implementation. Without “buy in” from those stakeholders needed to implement programs and projects, the IRWM Plan cannot be implemented effectively. Stakeholders in the WVCV Region have



been actively engaged in all of these activities, primarily through involvement with the watershed committees. Each watershed committee considered goals, objectives, resource management strategies, and projects for inclusion in the WCVV IRWM Plan Update and shared their input with the WCVV Steering Committee and General Membership.

4.2.7 Public Outreach and Involvement

The WCVV is dedicated to involving the public in the IRWM Program. The primary way that the general public in Ventura County is involved in local IRWM planning efforts is through local public interest groups that participate in the watershed committees and the WCVV or that work collaboratively to address issues being addressed in the IRWM. There are many organizations within the County actively working toward improving water resources and the environment. Many of these organizations existed prior to the IRWM program and most are now partners with the IRWM effort.

All WCVV meetings are open to the public and meeting dates and agendas are posted on the WCVV website. The public can have direct involvement in the IRWM process by becoming involved the WCVV watershed committees or through the public interest groups that participate in the committees. The public can access information about the IRWM process and the WCVV through its website (www.watershedscoalition.org) and on Facebook. Other outreach methods have included special events, articles in local newspapers and other media coverage, and through regular e-mail communications. These public involvement methods have all been used during the IRWM process beginning in 2002 when Proposition 50 was approved by the voters.

Two very successful special events related to the IRWM planning process were conducted in 2005 and 2010 by the U.C. Cooperative Extension and its partners. The events were workshops entitled “Watershed U” and focused on existing conditions and emerging issues of concern in the Santa Clara River and Ventura River Watersheds. Members of the public as well as representatives of State, Federal and local agencies, and non-profit and environmental groups participated.

A recent special event was conducted in 2012 during Watershed Awareness Month when local entities sponsored events focused on public outreach and education. Public workshops have also been held on different topics, such as climate change, historical ecology, and water quality, which are important components of the IRWM program. Public notices of these types of events are included in newspaper ads, legal notices and press releases, and are posted on the WCVV and local agency websites.

4.3 Governance Structure and Process

4.3.1 Overview

The IRWM Region in Ventura County has been governed by the WCVV since 2006. The County of Ventura County Executive Office provides staff support, program management and IRWM grant administration for the WCVV, as well as applying for IRWM grants on their behalf. The WCVV meets the requirement that the group include “three or more local agencies, at least two of which have statutory authority over water supply and water management...” as evidenced by the list of stakeholders contained in Table 4-1.



4.3.2 Governance Structure

Two agreements among participating entities and the County of Ventura guide management of the Region: the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and the Charter. The current WVC MOU (see Appendix E) was adopted in 2008 and was recently extended to 2018. The MOU reflects the consolidation of two predecessor IRWM groups: the Ventura Countywide Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Group formed in 2004, and the Calleguas Creek Steering Committee which was created in 1996.

The WVC Charter was adopted in 2009 to formalize the governance structure, define the roles of the various committees, and describe the decision-making process. The charter was amended in 2013 (see Appendix F for a copy of the full WVC Charter). The purpose of the Charter is to:

- A. Provide for a common understanding of Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) organization and administration.
- B. Provide an orderly procedure for making consensus decisions related to IRWM planning and management issues.
- C. Provide an orderly procedure for making consensus decisions related to future IRWM grant proposals.
- D. Comply with State IRWM planning requirements.
- E. Provide financial transparency for IRWM expenditures.

The WVC governance structure is comprised of the General Membership, which represents interested stakeholders from throughout the Region; the Steering Committee, which is comprised of two representatives from each watershed committee and the Program Director (County of Ventura); and three watershed committees that represent the Santa Clara River, Ventura River and Calleguas Creek Watersheds. The organizational structure of the WVC is depicted on Figure 4-1 and the governance roles of the General Membership, Steering Committee, and Watershed Committees is described below Figure 4-1.

The types of entities and individuals actively participating in the WVC IRWM Program include:

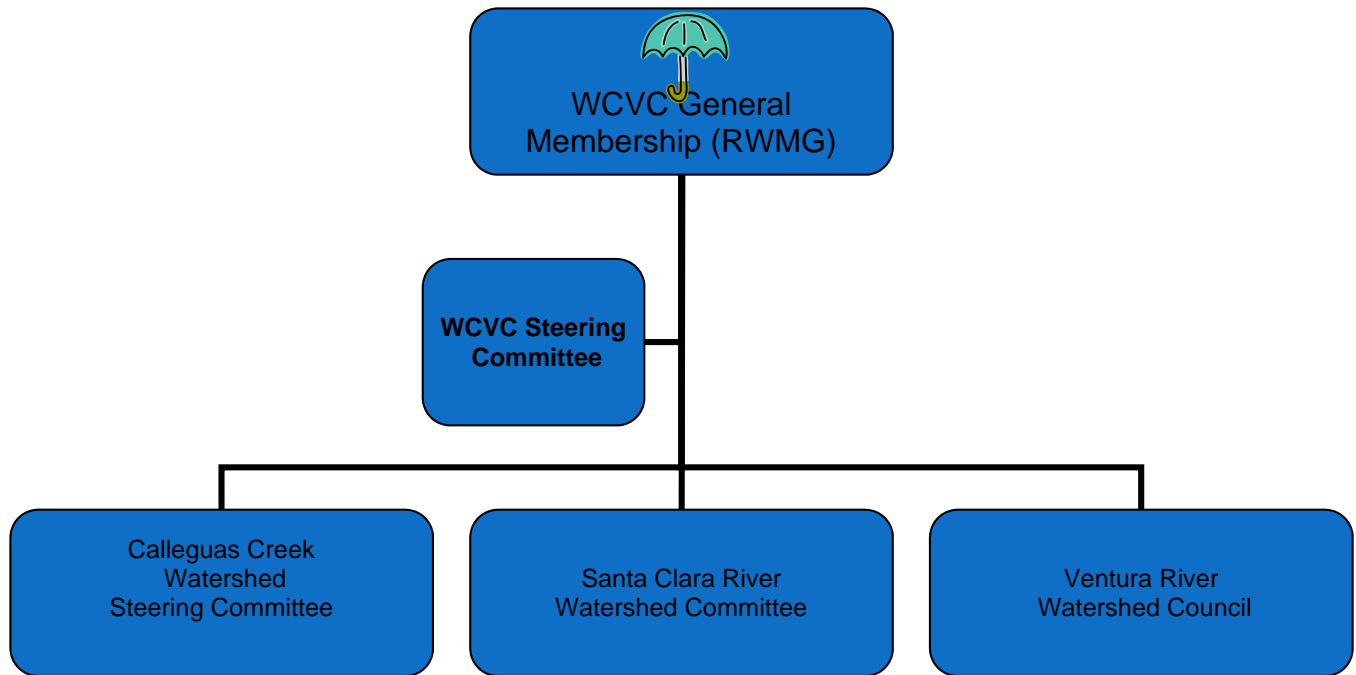
- The 10 cities in Ventura County, which represent water, sanitation, flood management, and land use planning.
- The County of Ventura, which represents water, stormwater, flood management, land use planning, waterworks operations, and conducts ecosystem restoration.
- Major water wholesale agencies.
- County water districts and private water companies.
- Sanitation districts.
- Non-governmental environmental and public interest groups.
- Agricultural and business groups.
- State and Federal agencies.
- Groundwater basin management authorities.
- Community organizations and recreation facility providers.

- Native American Tribal members.
- Interested persons.

A complete list of member entities, including those that adopted or supported the 2006 IRWM Plan, is provided in Table 4-1.

The governance structure is shown in the diagram, and further described below.

Figure 4-1



General Membership: This is the full RWMG and consists of all of the interested stakeholders in the WVCV IRWM Region. The General Membership has the ultimate authority for decisions related to the IRWM Plan. The General Membership is the forum for integration of regional water management issues, projects, and concerns. More than 200 agencies, interest groups, and individuals are included in the General Membership, and new members are always welcome. Since 2006, more than 30 new groups and individuals have been added to the General Membership. There are no requirements for membership and there are no dues levied for membership on any of the committees that are part of the WVCV. Funding for the WVCV is provided by twenty-one local entities that serve as the funding partners. The general membership typically meets twice a year. In addition to meetings, the stakeholders receive regular email communications and information posted on the website (www.watershedscoalition.org). Approximately 35 to 40 people attend WVCV General Membership meetings.

As the RWMG, the General Membership has the ultimate decision-making authority on behalf of the IRWM Region, acting on recommendations of the Steering Committee related to IRWMP amendments, the priority list for projects to be included in IRWM grant applications, and the policies or procedures that govern the WVCV. Decisions are made by consensus, and there is rarely any



dissent when a vote is taken. The General Membership is supported by the WCVC Chair and the IRWM Project Manager.

Steering Committee: Established in 2009, the Steering Committee is the leadership group for the WCVC and is comprised of two appointed representatives from each of the three watershed committees and the Program Director, for a total of seven members. The IRWM Project Manager provides coordination and support. The Program Director chairs the meetings but does not vote. Steering Committee members represent the interest of their individual watersheds and integrate those interests into the broader regional plan. They also act as a conduit to keep the stakeholders of their respective watersheds informed of actions taken at the regional level. The Steering Committee provides programmatic and fiscal oversight to the ongoing IRWMP process and directs both the work plan and cost allocations for the twenty-one agencies providing financial support for the regional effort.

The Steering Committee meets approximately four to six times per year to address issues that pertain to the entire Region and discuss policy issues, project selection, grant application and management, and amendments to the IRWM Plan. The Steering Committee receives input from the three watershed committees, and when regional action is needed, makes recommendations to the General Membership for final action. Administrative support to the Steering Committee is provided by the WCVC Chair and the IRWM Project Manager.

Watershed Committees: Santa Clara River, Ventura River and Calleguas Creek Watershed Committees comprise the watershed committee component of the IRWM governance structure. The watershed committees meet either monthly or bi-monthly depending on the need and focus on policies, issues, projects, and concerns relevant to each individual watershed, as well as those topics common to all three watersheds. The stakeholder groups and entities represented in the watershed committees vary somewhat, and there is some overlap among watersheds (i.e., State, Federal and County agencies, agricultural groups, regional non-governmental organizations). Each watershed committee establishes goals, objectives and performance measures, and identifies implementation projects and programs. Decisions are made on a consensus basis and forwarded to the Steering Committee for discussion and action prior to being considered by the General Membership as required by the WCVC Charter. Support to the Santa Clara River Watershed Committee is provided by the IRWM Project Manager. The Calleguas Creek Watershed Steering Committee is supported by staff of the Calleguas Municipal Water District. The Ventura River Watershed Council is supported by a Watershed Coordinator operating from the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy office. For more information about each watershed committee, see Section 4.2.

The core focus of the WCVC has been regional water management, and that focus will continue regardless of the availability of State grant funding. WCVC members recognize the effectiveness and efficiency of working together to develop mutually beneficial projects that address specific and regional needs in a way that would not otherwise be possible or cost-effective for individual entities working on their own. This participation and cooperation has become essential because the financial resources to fund projects are diminishing, decreasing the ability of agencies to fund projects on their own. Collaboration on joint projects leverages these declining funds for the good of the community.

The focus of the WCVC governance has been the primary factor contributing to the success and sustainability of the IRWM planning process. The governance structure encourages agencies and



individuals to participate and stay engaged because they are able to focus on issues in their immediate area of interest first and then see the connection with larger regional issues. This focus fosters consensus building and avoids problems that can occur when the scale of planning gets too broad. It's easier to feel ownership of the process (i.e., it's *our* process instead of *their* process) when you are able to focus on what matters most to you. The WCVV is a collection of watershed-based interests that come together to address solutions to regional problems.

The governance structure has led to a strong and sustainable IRWM program for the past four years. Though there are procedures, the overall process is fairly informal and flexible, which allows stakeholders to participate at different levels depending on their time and interest. The WCVV has been successful in obtaining more than \$43 million in IRWM Grants as a result of the group's ability to reach consensus on goals, objectives and projects, and because of strong collaboration among all of the members. WCVV members work effectively together even when conflicts arise. Stakeholders are willing to compromise in the interest of meeting regional needs and often the benefits they receive strengthen their own organization. Positive working relationships among stakeholders, informed decision-making, and a strong desire for program success are facilitated by the WCVV governance structure and have been a hallmark of the effectiveness of the Region. This structure and process will be continued into the foreseeable future.

4.3.3 Effective Decision-Making

Description of Consensus Based Decision-making:

The following is a description of consensus decision-making which provides background regarding how decisions are made by the WCVV.

"Consensus decision-making is a group decision-making process that seeks the consent of all participants. Consensus may be defined ... as an acceptable resolution, one that can be supported, even if not the "favorite" of each individual. Consensus is defined by Merriam-Webster as, first, general agreement, and second, group solidarity of belief or sentiment. It has its origin in the Latin word cōnsēnsus (agreement), which is from cōnsentiō meaning literally feel together. It is used to describe both the decision and the process of reaching a decision. Consensus decision-making is thus concerned with the process of deliberating and finalizing a decision, and the social and political effects of using this process.

Consensus decision-making attempts to provide outcomes such as:

- *Better Decisions: Through including the input of all stakeholders the resulting proposals may better address all potential concerns.*
- *Better Implementation: A process that includes and respects all parties, and generates as much agreement as possible sets the stage for greater cooperation in implementing the resulting decisions.*
- *Better Group Relationships: A cooperative, collaborative group atmosphere can foster greater group cohesion and interpersonal connection.*



As a decision-making process, consensus decision-making aims to be:

- ***Agreement Seeking:*** A consensus decision-making process attempts to help everyone get what they need.
- ***Collaborative:*** Participants contribute to a shared proposal and shape it into a decision that meets the concerns of all group members as much as possible.
- ***Cooperative:*** Participants in an effective consensus process should strive to reach the best possible decision for the group and all of its members, rather than competing for personal preferences.
- ***Egalitarian:*** All members of a consensus decision-making body should be afforded ... equal input into the process. All members have the opportunity to present, and amend proposals.
- ***Inclusive:*** As many stakeholders as possible should be involved in the consensus decision-making process.
- ***Participatory:*** The consensus process should actively solicit the input and participation of all decision-makers”

Source: Wikipedia

Decision-Making in WCVC

The WCVC decision-making process is based on this consensus approach. As described above, consensus is a process used to reach the highest level of agreement without dividing the participants into factions. When actions are required, such as adoption of or revision to the Charter, MOU, project list, goals, or other actions that require formal support of the WCVC, the recommendations flow from the watershed committees, to the Steering Committee, to the General Membership group, which has the final decision-making authority. Consensus has always been the goal and through informal “voting,” has almost always been achieved. This process encourages and facilitates participation at the local and regional levels. While there have, at times, been opinions expressed by individual stakeholders that differ from the majority of the group, consensus is reached because participants recognize the importance of reaching decisions that are in the best interest of the Region as a whole.

Decisions are made at publicly noticed meetings and are the result of deliberations based on the information presented to the group. The decisions of the watershed committees are conveyed to the Steering Committee, and the Steering Committee decisions are conveyed to the General Membership typically via e-mail.

The Region has been implementing a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process through the WCVC, its Watershed Committees, as well as related groups, to address water management strategies that are contained in the WCVC IRWM Plan. This process addresses water management issues and develops integrated, multi-benefit, regional solutions and projects that emphasize environmental stewardship. Diverse points of view have been and will continue to be considered and represented throughout the decision-making process.



4.3.4 Collaborative Process Used to Establish IRWM Plan Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

Establishment of the six primary goals contained in this IRWM Plan began with review and evaluation of the applicability of and continued need for the five goals adopted in the 2006 IRWM Plan. Following review and discussion, the previous 5 goals (then called objectives) were deemed to be necessary and appropriate for this current IRWM Plan as well as the addition of a new goal to address climate change impacts.

The process for developing the new goals began with discussions and recommendations at the watershed committee level followed by ratification by the Steering Committee and approval by the General Membership. The process was open and inclusive, and the goals were adopted by building consensus among the participants.

4.3.5 Long-Term Implementation of the IRWM Plan

IRWM Planning is an ongoing process within the Region. Stakeholder committees in the WVCV meet on a regular basis to continue the process of identifying and supporting solutions to regional water management problems, a process that began after the passage of Proposition 50. The WVCV Steering Committee guides the IRWM Program staff and consultants in the ongoing efforts to implement the annual work plan as well as the IRWM Plan. These activities include maintaining the regional database and new web portal and website, coordinating various elements of the Plan with implementing agencies, plan performance monitoring, and providing necessary administrative support to achieve IRWM Plan objectives. In addition to hundreds of hours devoted to the program by WVCV members, the IRWM Program activities are supported by County CEO staff at no cost to the Program. A consultant hired by the County serves as program “staff” and has an office in the CEO’s office. The IRWM Plan is supported by all ten Cities and all major retail water purveyors, and by each of the wholesale water agencies, which have major responsibilities for water management in the watersheds – as well as many other entities.

4.3.6 Updating or Amending the IRWM Plan, Including Interim Changes and Formal Changes

When first adopted in 2006, the WVCV IRWM Plan was intended to be a dynamic document, reflecting the changing needs of the Region and incorporating new information and resource management strategies. As specified in Section 6 of the 2006 IRWM Plan, the process for updating information or adding new projects includes the publication of addendums to the Plan, which serve as interim changes to the Plan that are made in between more formal updates to the Plan. The first Addendum was published in 2010, the second in 2013. Each WVCV IRWM Plan Addendum was prepared in order to add new projects as described in the project review process of the IRWM Plan. This is the mechanism established by the WVCV to add new projects to the Plan. The first formal update to the Plan is reflected in this document: the 2014 IRWM Plan Update. The 2014 WVCV IRWM Plan was developed by WVCV staff, consultants and stakeholders in compliance with the 2012 Proposition 84 IRWM Plan Standards and reflects changes in the Region since 2006.

A new interactive web portal has been developed by a consultant with input from WVCV staff and stakeholders. Ongoing maintenance of the WVCV IRWM portal will be facilitated by WVCV staff as



well as stakeholders and will serve as the focal point for sharing data and information, collecting project ideas, linking stakeholders to each other and to the information that helps them better participate in the ongoing IRWM program. The portal will also provide an efficient mechanism for updating elements of the IRWM Plan as needed and to keep it current and relevant. Additional information on the web portal can be found in Section 9 – Data Management and Technical Analysis.

4.3.7 Effective Communication Internal and External to WVCV

Effective communication is essential to effective collaboration, implementation and consensus building. Stakeholders in the WVCV IRWM Program have a variety of ways to obtain information and make their voices heard. Perhaps the most effective way is through face-to-face meetings. There are regular meetings of the WVCV General Membership, the Steering Committee and the three watershed committees. At the meetings, stakeholders discuss a variety of topics related to specific projects, studies, and ongoing IRWM planning and implementation efforts. As a result of the open meeting process and ongoing communication, participants have developed strong relationships and a high level of trust that has made it possible to reach consensus on many issues that might otherwise create conflicts.

Another important way WVCV stakeholders communicate is through e-mail. E-mail messages are regularly distributed to a large list of stakeholders regarding IRWM programs, projects, and activities. There are currently more than 200 individuals and agencies on the list.

The regularly updated WVCV website is another communication vehicle to enhance public and stakeholder awareness of the IRWM Plan, projects, programs, grant funding, watershed-level efforts, meetings, and resources and links. A new web portal is being developed that will serve this function even more effectively and eventually the website will be phased out. Additionally, WVCV members have access to a project management and communication website called Basecamp, which provides an avenue for local stakeholders to stay connected and to post documents and messages to the group. These communication channels have been effective and will be continued.

4.3.8 Balanced Access and Opportunity for Participation in the IRWM Program

There is a broad level of participation in the WVCV from different types of stakeholders in the Region. There is no requirement to contribute financially to participate. New members are welcome to join the watershed committees or the general membership at any time and thereby become part of the governance structure. Steering Committee membership is by appointment from the three watershed committees. There is no cost associated with serving on the Steering Committee and representatives to the Steering Committee are not required to be among the 21 entities that fund the ongoing program costs. No changes are anticipated to the current funding structure or process.

4.4 Coordination of WVCV IRWM Program Projects and Activities

Successful implementation of IRWM projects and program activities requires a lot of coordination among a diverse group of stakeholder. Stakeholders engaged in the WVCV IRWM Program range from interested citizens to larger scale agencies implementing multi-million dollar projects. Coordination of water management issues, priorities and project selection and implementation



occurs as part of the WVCV's IRWM planning effort and stakeholder process. This coordination minimizes duplication of effort and helps in the development regional, integrated solutions to the Region's challenges and conflicts.

As described on the previous pages of this section, is coordination is achieved through regional water management group (WVCV) meetings, smaller working groups, watershed committee meetings, e-mail communications and the WVCV website. The newly developed WVCV IRWM web portal will serve as another means for stakeholders and project proponents to share information about their projects, including status of implementation. Please see Section 9 for more information about the web portal.

Regional coordination has led to development of joint agency projects such as the Salinity Management Pipeline (a series of brackish water de-salters and pipelines to distribute waste to the ocean), the Regional Water Use Efficiency forum that led to creation of the Water Wise Gardening website, the lower Santa Clara River Parkway Project, and the Groundwater Recovery Enhancement and Treatment (GREAT) project which will ultimately function as a regional recycled water facility. For more information about the relationship of local water management planning activities with the IRWM Program please see Section 11 – Relation to Local Water Planning.

In summary, there are many water resource management efforts underway across the County which are coordinated through the IRWM Program, the Association of Water Agencies of Ventura County and other groups (see Table 4-2). This has been the case for many years and has led to cost effective and efficient solutions to many local water related conflicts. Ongoing coordination is essential to the success of the WVCV IRWM Region, particularly when faced with challenges such as long-term droughts.

4.4.1 Coordination with Adjacent IRWM Regions

The WVCV IRWM Region and adjacent IRWM Regions (Santa Barbara County, Greater Los Angeles and the Upper Santa Clara River Watershed) work together to efficiently plan and implement IRWM programs and projects. Please see Figure 3-18 in Section 3 – Region Description - for a map showing the adjacent IRWM Regions. The water management issues, strategies and projects being implemented within all of these Regions are very similar. Each Region is facing significant challenges such as groundwater overdraft, water quality degradation, increasing populations and the need to import State Water to meet local demands. Some of these Regions are adjacent to the coast and are experiencing seawater intrusion into shallow aquifers due to groundwater pumping. There are a wide variety of climate zones represented by these Regions - which include coastal plains, oak woodlands, high deserts and higher elevation mountainous areas.

As previously described, the WVCV IRWM Region encompasses most of Ventura County with the exception of the portion of the Malibu Creek Watershed that lies within the County. That area has been included in the Greater LA IRWM Region for IRWM planning and implementation purposes. The WVCV IRWM Region shares a few watersheds and groundwater basins with neighboring or adjacent regions, and as described below a variety of collaborative programs have been implemented that address shared resources. IRWM regions adjacent to Ventura County (or sharing a groundwater basin as is the case with San Luis Obispo County) include:



- ◆ Santa Barbara IRWM Region to the west
- ◆ San Luis Obispo IRWM Region – with a shared groundwater basin
- ◆ Upper Santa Clara IRWM Region to the north and east
- ◆ Greater LA IRWM Region, specifically the North Santa Monica Bay Sub-region to the south

Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo IRWM Regions are in the Central Coast hydrologic region (Funding Area) for the purposes of Proposition 84 funding. WCVC, Upper Santa Clara and Greater LA Regions are in the Los Angeles Funding Area. Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties are also in a different Regional Water Quality Control Board area – Region 3, while most of the WCVC, Upper Santa Clara and Greater LA Regions are part of Region 4.

Stakeholders in the adjoining IRWM Regions share information and have been working together to address issues and priorities that are mutually beneficial through ongoing meetings and communication and sometimes development of joint projects. Specific coordination efforts with adjoining IRWM regions include:

- ◆ Attending regional water management group meetings in neighboring regions
- ◆ Including representatives from neighboring Regions on IRWM email distribution lists
- ◆ Including links to all neighboring regions on individual websites
- ◆ Regular meetings to discuss further ways to coordinate, identify joint projects, and discuss current and future joint activities

It is widely recognized that effective and comprehensive integrated water management cannot be confined within arbitrary or political boundaries particularly when natural resource areas are not neatly contained within those boundaries. Coordination with these adjacent regions will continue to provide cross-regional benefits.

Further information about coordination among IRWM Regions adjacent to the WCVC IRWM Region follows:

The Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo County IRWM Regions

Santa Barbara County lies to the west of Ventura County. When efforts to pass Proposition 50 were initiated in 2002, agencies in Santa Barbara and Ventura County met with agencies in other counties to discuss how to collaborate in the formation of IRWM Regions and the development of projects. Subsequently, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties each formed their own IRWM Region. In 2006 Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties began inter-County dialogue through a workshop to address IRWM issues and explore ways to collaborate.

There are no significant water management conflicts between the WCVC Region and the Santa Barbara County Region. The counties are very similar in terms of land use patterns and resources. A significant number of people commute from Ventura County to Santa Barbara County for employment.

In terms of shared resources, a small portion of the Rincon Creek Watershed and a larger portion of the Cuyama River Watershed and Groundwater Basin lie within both regions. These areas are sparsely populated, and there is no shared infrastructure. In 2007 a watershed management plan



was adopted for the Rincon Creek Watershed. While Ventura County representatives reviewed the plan, the actions to implement the Plan are largely being taken by entities in Santa Barbara County. Representatives from both Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties meet periodically to identify additional opportunities to collaborate along this watershed.

The Cuyama Groundwater Basin is a very large basin which underlies Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties as well as a small portion in San Luis Obispo County. This important basin is in a state of overdraft and the USGS and the County of Santa Barbara, have been engaged in a multi-year study to address groundwater hydrology and water quality. Ventura County and San Luis Obispo have provided information for the study. Most of the water used in the Basin is for agricultural irrigation. A portion of the area along the shared boundary is part of the Los Padres National Forest and is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The results of this study will help the three Regions establish appropriate groundwater management strategies and identify opportunities for projects and additional collaboration.

In the last major prolonged drought (1986-91), Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties jointly sponsored an emergency water supply project that brought water to Santa Barbara County a water “wheeling” effort involving several Ventura County water purveyors. This project was needed to help meet critical water demands in the southern part of Santa Barbara County. To this day, there is also ongoing coordination among water purveyors within the three Regions regarding use efficiency and drought response programs.

Representatives of these Regions meet periodically to identify opportunities for projects and programs that provide mutual benefit. However, the Proposition 84 IRWM Implementation Grant funds come from the Central Coast Funding Area rather than the Los Angeles Funding Area.

Upper Santa Clara River Watershed IRWM Region

The Santa Clara River is one of the last remaining natural rivers in Southern California, and its watershed is the largest in Ventura County. The 1,600 square mile watershed spans Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, and efforts are underway among entities in both Counties to work together to address issues of mutual concern and benefit such as water quality improvement. The portion of the watershed located in Los Angeles County is locally referred to as the Upper Santa Clara River Watershed, while the portion in Ventura County is often referred to as the Lower Santa Clara River Watershed and is included in the WVCV IRWM Region. While each Region was accepted separately in 2009 by DWR under the Proposition 84 Region Acceptance Process, the Ventura and Los Angeles Regions are working together for comprehensive management of the entire watershed.

The primary conflicts between upper and lower portions of the Watershed relate to water quality and the different approaches to land use development in the two Counties. The Upper portion of the Santa Clara River Watershed, located in Los Angeles County encompasses the City of Santa Clarita and several unincorporated communities in Los Angeles County and is characterized by rapid population growth. Primarily urban in nature, runoff from these communities flows into the Santa Clara River where it passes through Ventura County. Of great interest to the stakeholders in Ventura County are the high chloride levels in the Upper Santa Clara River IRWM Region. Sources of chloride include self-regenerating water softeners, drinking water, and other additives that contribute to chloride in wastewater effluent. A Chloride TMDL was adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control



Board in 2008. The Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District is currently developing a Facilities Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report that will analyze a wide range of compliance options and include a detailed analysis of all the environmental impacts. The lower portion of the Watershed, located in Ventura County is characterized largely by agricultural operations and small cities and unincorporated communities, before reaching the ocean and passing through the relatively larger cities of Ventura and Oxnard.

The Upper Santa Clara River (USCR) IRWM Region was formed in 2007 and adopted its IRWM Plan in 2008. Since its formation the USCR Region, there has been close coordination with the WCVC IRWM Region. A variety of joint efforts are being implemented along the Watershed. A few of those efforts are listed below.

- Water quality improvement project and Chloride TMDL implementation – Led by Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts with participation in both counties – alternative projects to improve water quality currently being considered
- Watershed U – Collaboration throughout the watershed led by U.C. Cooperative Extension with participation in both counties - 2005
- Memorandum of Understanding between United Water Conservation District and water agencies in the Upper Santa Clara River Watershed regarding groundwater modeling, water rights, quality, and quantity
- Upper and Lower Santa Clara River Conservation Plans were prepared by The Nature Conservancy – with participation in both Counties
- Natural Floodplain Management efforts – including land acquisition for easements in the floodplain, led by The Nature Conservancy with participation in both counties
- Santa Clara River Parkway Project – led by California Coastal Conservancy – with participation in both counties – currently underway
- Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan – joint planning effort with entities in both counties and the Army Corps of Engineers - Completed in 2005
- Army Corps Feasibility Study – geomorphology assessment – joint effort with both Counties and the Army Corps of Engineers – currently underway
- Land use planning – ongoing discussions between Ventura and Los Angeles County planning agencies regarding land development projects in the Upper Santa Clara River Watershed
- Ongoing efforts to improve habitat and provide stewardship for resources in the entire watershed – some local environmental groups (Friends of the Santa Clara River, Santa Clara River Trustee Council, The Nature Conservancy) represent the entire watershed
- Ongoing coordination between Los Angeles and Ventura County regarding flood management projects and strategies

The two IRWM Regions coordinate their respective stakeholder processes, planning efforts, and projects to ensure that the entire watershed is protected and managed appropriately despite the presence of the county boundaries. Representatives of each Region reviewed and supported the other's IRWM Plans through letters of support. Joint meetings of the two groups are held once or twice a year to discuss topics of mutual interest and share information about IRWM planning efforts and project implementation. The two Regions are in the same funding area under Proposition 84 so future coordination will include collaboration on possible joint projects in the final round of Implementation Grant funding.



To further enhance coordination between the portions of the Watershed, stakeholders in both areas (in both Ventura and Los Angeles Counties) recently agreed to establish a watershed coordinator staff position. The Coordinator will enhance communication and collaboration across the entire watershed and help tie together the many existing programs including the efforts listed below.

Greater Los Angeles IRWM Region – North Santa Monica Bay Sub-Region

The WVCV IRWM Region shares its southern boundary with the Greater LA IRWM Region (also referred to as GLAC), specifically the North Santa Monica Bay Sub-Region which is one of 5 sub regions in the GLAC IRWM Region. Along portions of this shared boundary lies the Malibu Creek Watershed, which is addressed in the GLAC IRWM Plan. As described above with other neighboring regions, representatives of each group attend the other regional water management group meetings when possible and have coordinated on water quality issues which are of particular concern in this watershed. We have discussed joint projects and will continue to coordinate our IRWM efforts in the future. The entities in Ventura County working most closely with the North Santa Monica Bay Sub Region participants are the Triunfo Sanitary District, the City of Thousand Oaks, and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District. This coordination focuses primarily on TMDL issues.

Representatives of WVCV also attend the GLAC Leadership Committee meetings periodically, and GLAC representatives have attended WVCV General Membership meetings. There are plans to increase coordination between the two regions to enhance information sharing and networking to facilitate greater coordination on identifying joint projects, financing options, and meeting DAC's needs. Ongoing communication via e-mail and phone calls includes sharing project lists, collaborating on review of state documents such as the California Water Plan Update 2013 (South Coast Regional Report), discussing implementation and governance strategies and other administrative approaches. This communication has resulted in a positive working relationship based on trust and common goals, among our two regions.

4.4.2 Coordination with State and Federal Entities

Representatives of State and Federal agencies participate in the WVCV IRWM program by attending meetings, and are invaluable in ongoing collaboration within the Region and are a helpful resource for planning, regulatory compliance, funding programs, data, and information sharing and protocol. These agencies include Regional Water Quality Control Board, Department of Water Resources, Department of Public Health, State Water Resources Control Board, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Coastal Conservancy and California State Parks Department, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Federal Environmental Protection Agency, and others. We work closely with staff from these agencies in development of TMDLs, applications for state/federal funding, accessing data sources and taking advantage of their research and expertise.

Local stakeholder entities have been fortunate to receive numerous grants and low-interest loans over the past 40 years, which have enabled the Region to implement beneficial water quality, water supply, flood protection, and habitat restoration projects. Representatives of WVCV work particularly closely with DWR staff in both the Southern Region Office in Glendale and in the



Sacramento office. This coordination and communication includes not only the IRWM grant and planning activities but also the California Water Plan Update and IRWM Strategic Plan processes. WCVC staff appreciates the assistance of DWR staff in many aspects of water management planning.