

# Ventura River Watershed Resilience Pilot Project



Advisory Group Meeting #1  
March 17, 2025



# Agenda

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

1. Introduce Advisory Group Chair - **Vivon Crawford, Ojai Valley Land Conservancy**
2. Introduce consultant team

## 2. Recap Decisions from January 30<sup>th</sup> Leadership Committee Meeting

1. Review schedule

## 3. Network Assessment Survey – review approach, process, questions and proposed launch including beta testing – Michele Romolini, Loyola Marymount University; Danielle Bram, Cal State Northridge; Jennifer Alford, Cal State San Bernardino

1. Discuss and provide input on draft questions
2. Solicit beta testers

## 4. Networks and How They Work – Mike Antos, Stantec

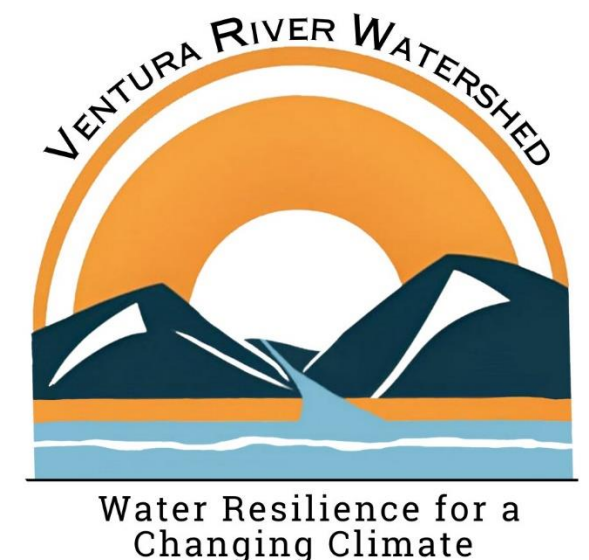
## 5. Advisory Group Roles and Protocols - Lara

1. **Action Item:** Review and approve draft *Advisory Group Roles and Protocols* guiding document
2. Advisory Group materials access – WRP website

## 6. Information Gathering for Water Budget Analysis – Jamil Ibrahim and Blair Greimann, Stantec

## 7. Preview Vision and Goals Workshop – Lara

## 8. Next Meeting Date: May 19th at 2:00 pm



# Recap Jan 30th Leadership Committee Outcomes

## DWR Requirements for Watershed Network Decision-Making

- ✓ Have **written policies and procedures**
- ✓ Establish an **equitable and inclusive** decision-making structure
- ✓ Ensure that all **stakeholders have a voice**, including **historically underrepresented communities**

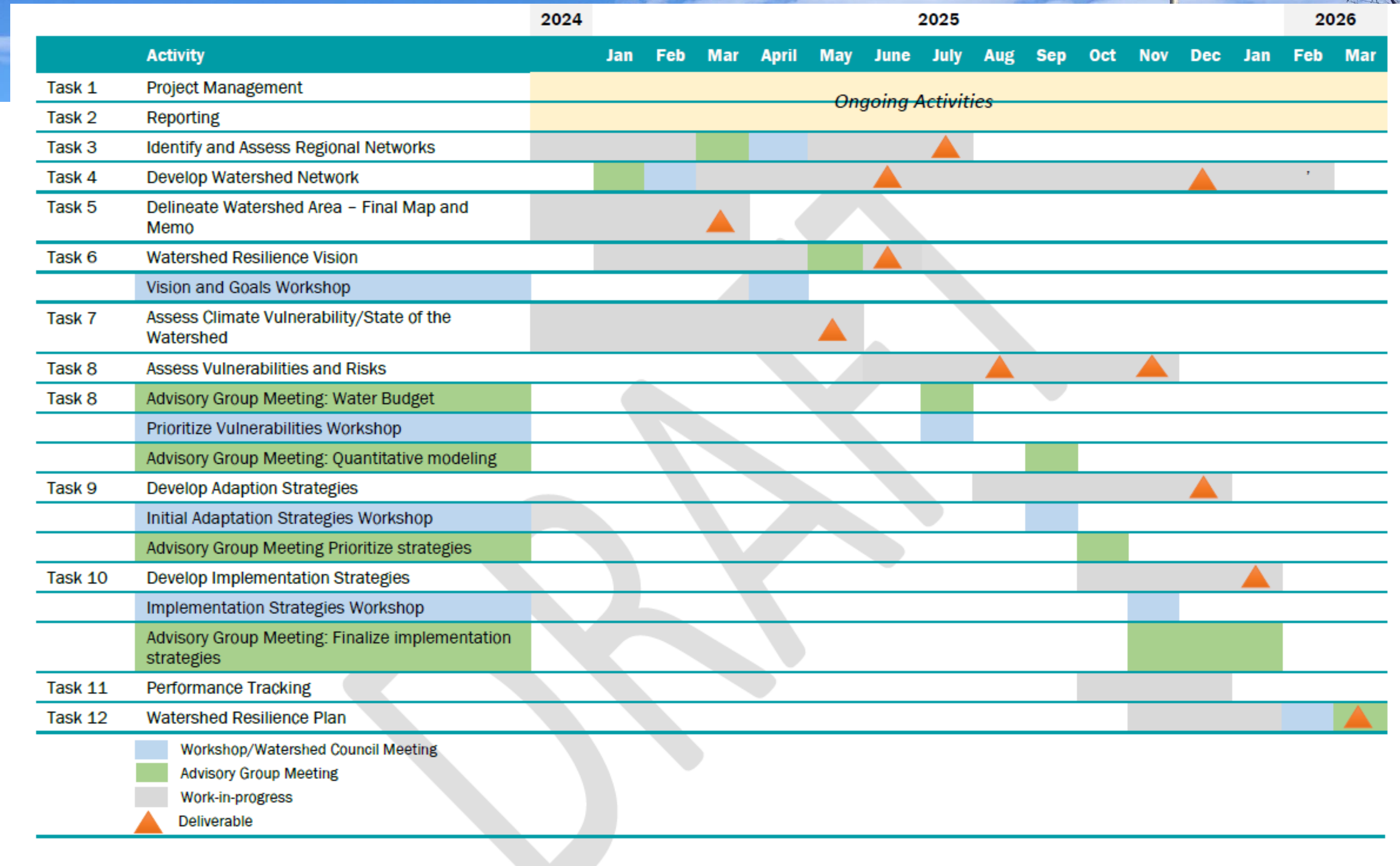
The **Ventura River Watershed Council will serve as the Watershed Network** (agreed upon at the October 3rd, 2024 Watershed Council meeting)

The **Leadership Committee formed an Advisory Group** to serve as the core advisory body for the WRP (agreed upon at the January 30th, 2025 Leadership Committee meeting).

# Advisory Group Meeting Schedule

- Membership mirrors Leadership Committee membership plus additional members for equity and representation
- Meet bimonthly on the 3rd Monday of the month at 2:00 pm
- March, May, July, September, November, January (*subject to change as tasks progress*)
- All virtual
- *Additional meeting proposed in April for workshop preparation (discussed under item 7)*

# Tentative Schedule



# Network Assessment Survey

## Task 3: Identify and Assess Regional Networks

Identify and assess existing regional networks, evaluating **participant engagement and contribution, inclusivity, and health of the networks**. Include regional water management groups, groundwater sustainability agencies, regional climate collaboratives, regional flood management groups, environmental groups, regional forest and fire capacity program groups, and other relevant water and resource management groups. Identify and engage **vulnerable communities, California Tribes**, and watershed participants not previously included in water-related decision-making and **assess their capacity and interest in contributing to this process**.

# Network Assessment Survey Overview

- Purpose of the Survey
  - Support work for Task 3 Identify and Assess Regional Networks and Task 4 Watershed Network Development
  - Identify and evaluate organizations working on water-climate resiliency in the Ventura River Watershed
  - Expand existing datasets to better understand: 1) Organization goals and expertise, 2) Projects, locations, and timelines, 3) Partnerships and collaboration networks, 4) Financial limitations and support needs
  - Inform the development of a STEW-MAP network assessment
- Who will be surveyed?
  - All organizations involved in water-climate resilience within the watershed and project area of interest (the Watershed Council email list will serve as a starting place)
- How it will be conducted?
  - Web-based survey
  - Distributed in April - May

# Watershed Network Assessment

**Danielle Bram**

Director, CGST

California State University, Northridge



CENTER FOR GEOSPATIAL  
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
California State University, Northridge

**Ben Chou**

Project Manager, CGST

California State University, Northridge



Institute for  
Watershed Resiliency  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

**Jennifer Alford, PhD**

Director, Institute for Watershed Resiliency

California State University, San Bernardino

**Michele Romolini, PhD**

Managing Director, Center for Urban Resilience

Loyola Marymount University



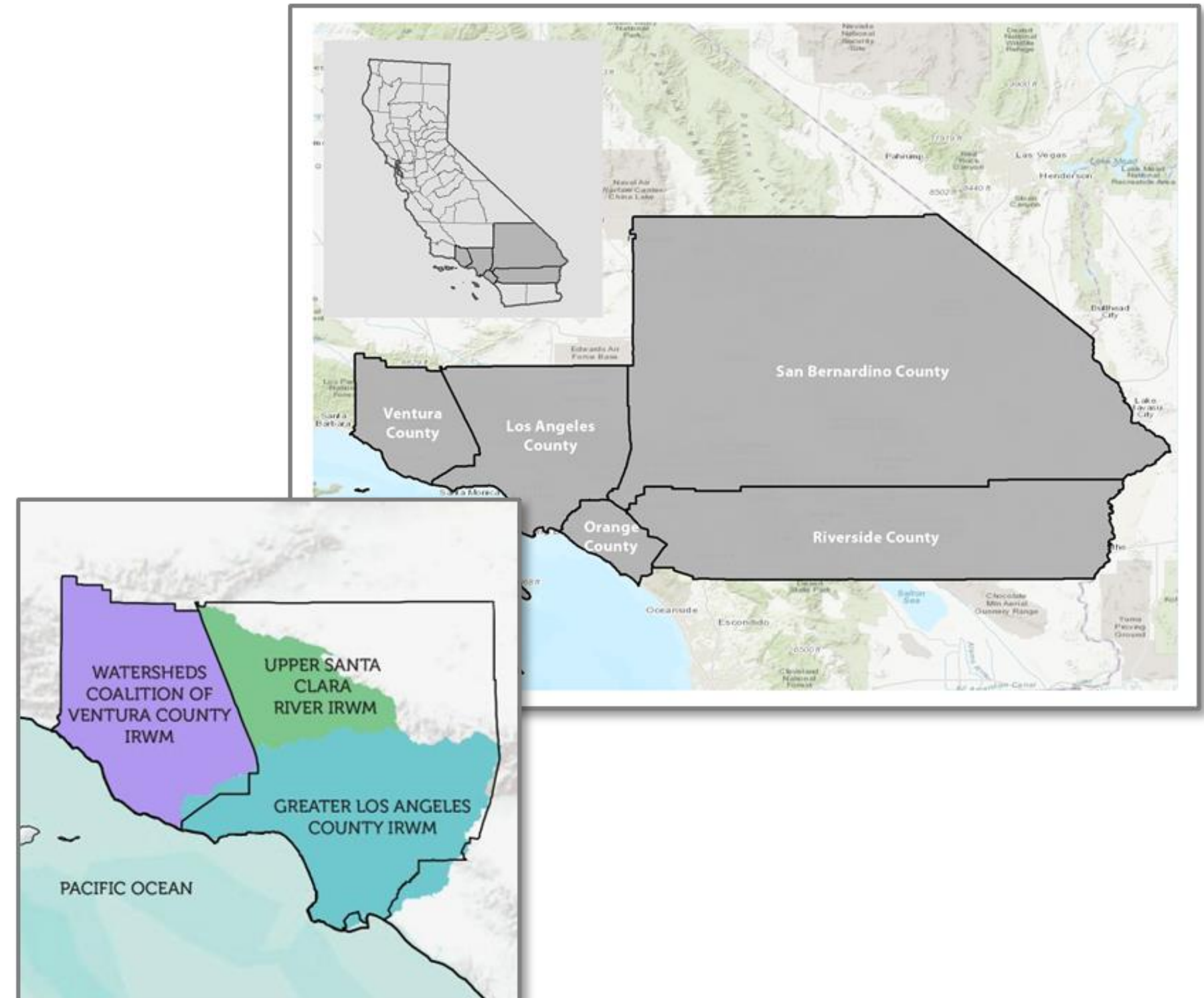
Loyola Marymount  
University  
Center for Urban  
Resilience



# Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program

## Main Goals

- Generate and increase community involvement
- Increase understanding of water resource needs
- Identify & prioritize technical assistance projects based on issues of greatest concern



# Institutional Needs Assessments

## Survey Questions

- Needs and strengths of the community they serve
- Barriers to equitable access to the benefits of water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure
- Governance and decision-making processes and engagement strategies
- Future challenges and opportunities

### COMMUNITY - Issues and Challenges

**[PROMPT]** Q18: What do you see as barriers to access the benefits of drinking water, wastewater, or stormwater infrastructure in your community?

  
8000

**(PROBE)** Q19: Is safe, affordable water for drinking, washing, and cooking accessible to all members of your community?

Please explain.

  
8000

Q20 (1): What types of drinking water and wastewater (sanitation) infrastructure/regulations impact your community?

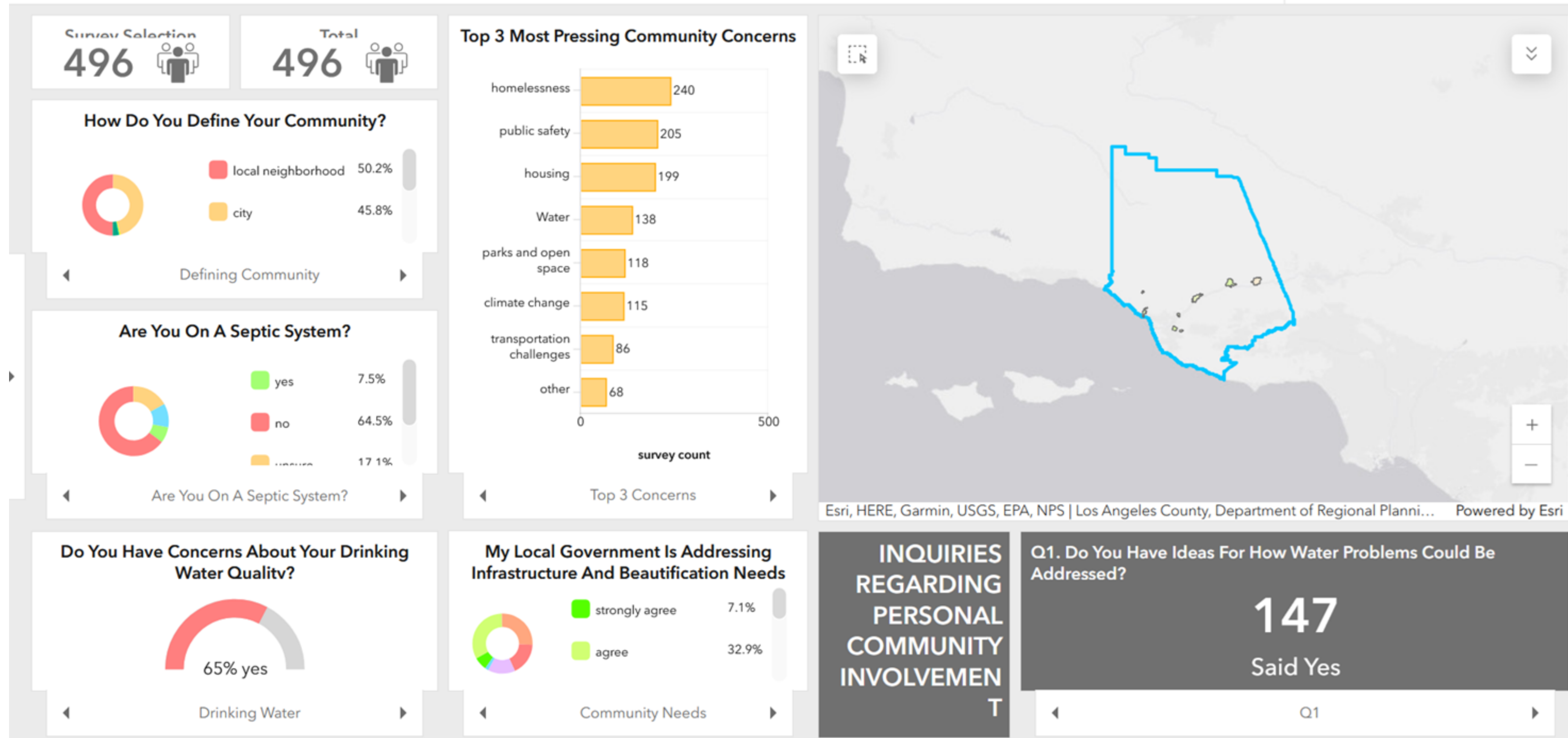
  
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# Survey Results Dashboard

## VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT DASHBOARD

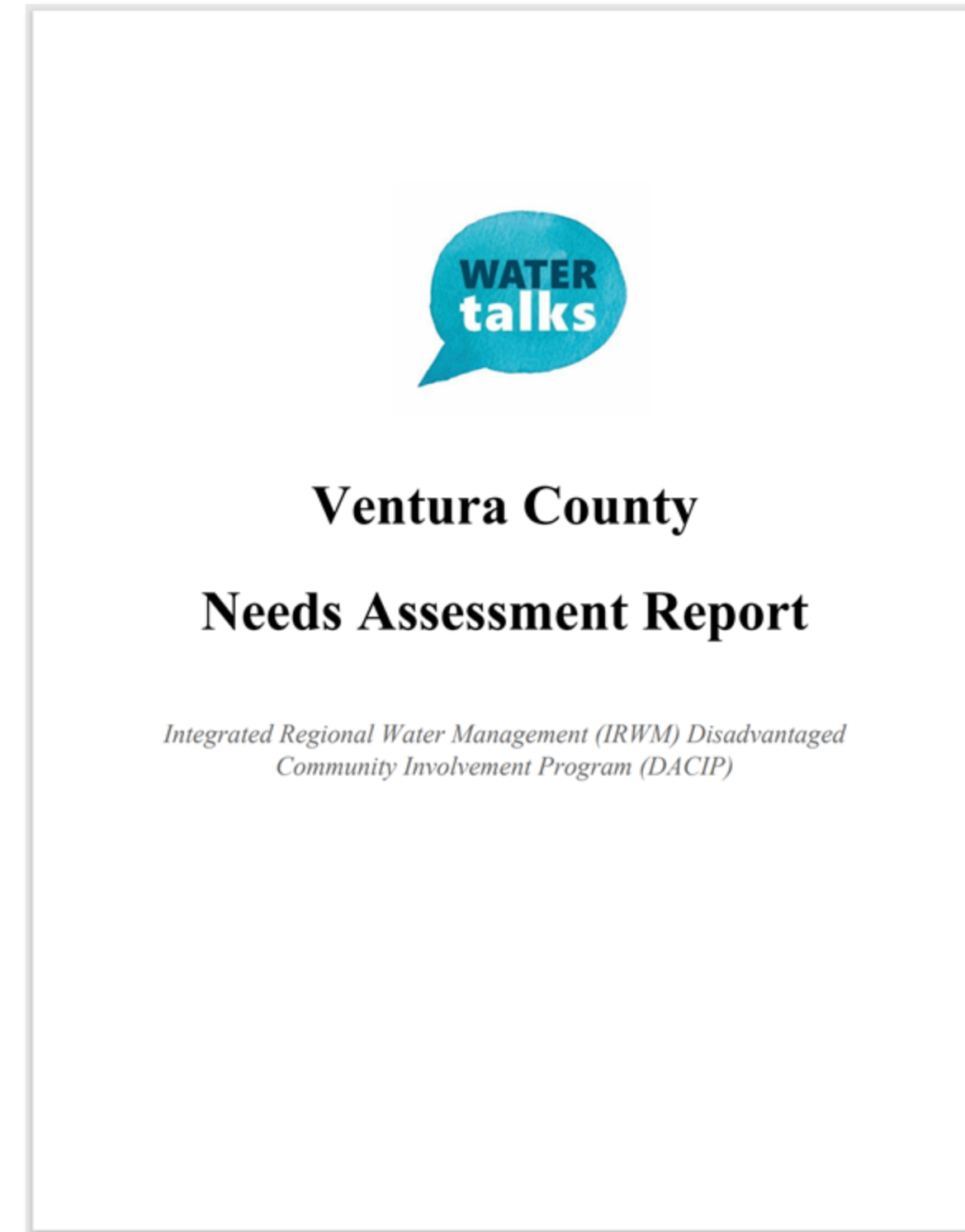
Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) | Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program (DACIP)

SELECT A COMMUNITY:  
No community selected



# Challenges

- **Infrastructure & Regulations**
  - Aging infrastructure
  - Changing regulatory requirements
  - Increasing development pressures
- **Community Engagement**
  - Limited participation by working populations
  - Lack of affordable/stable internet
  - Language barriers
- **Climate Change**
- **Tribal Engagement**



# LA River STEW-MAP

## Main Goals

- To find, survey, and map groups in the LA River Watershed working on environmental stewardship
- Understand groups' organizational activities, geographic footprint, and network relationships
- Produce online resources for a variety of end users



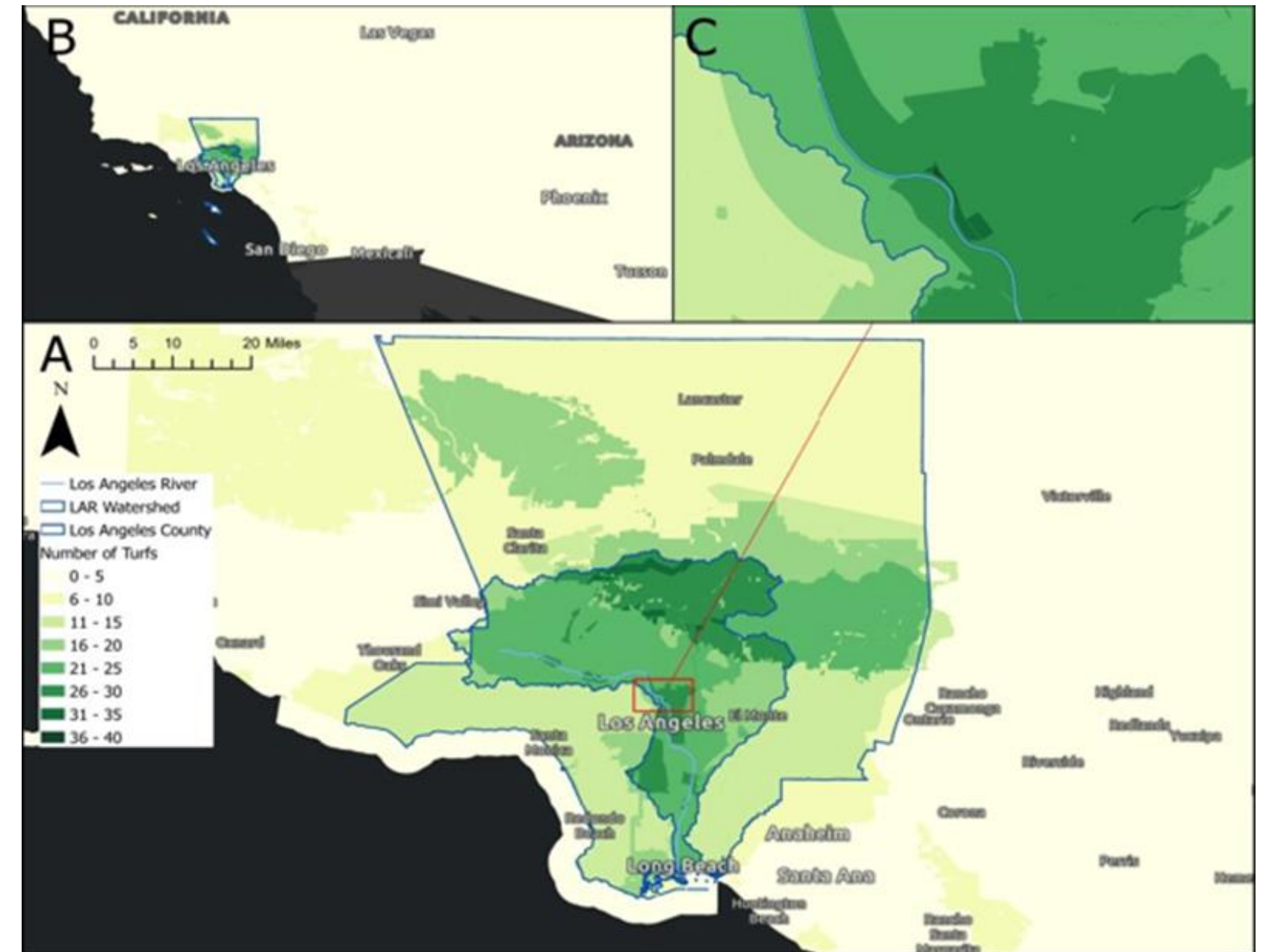
**STEWARDSHIP:**  
the act of conserving,  
managing, monitoring,  
transforming,  
advocating for, and/or  
educating the public  
about their local  
environments



# LA River STEW-MAP – Key Findings

## Stewardship Geography

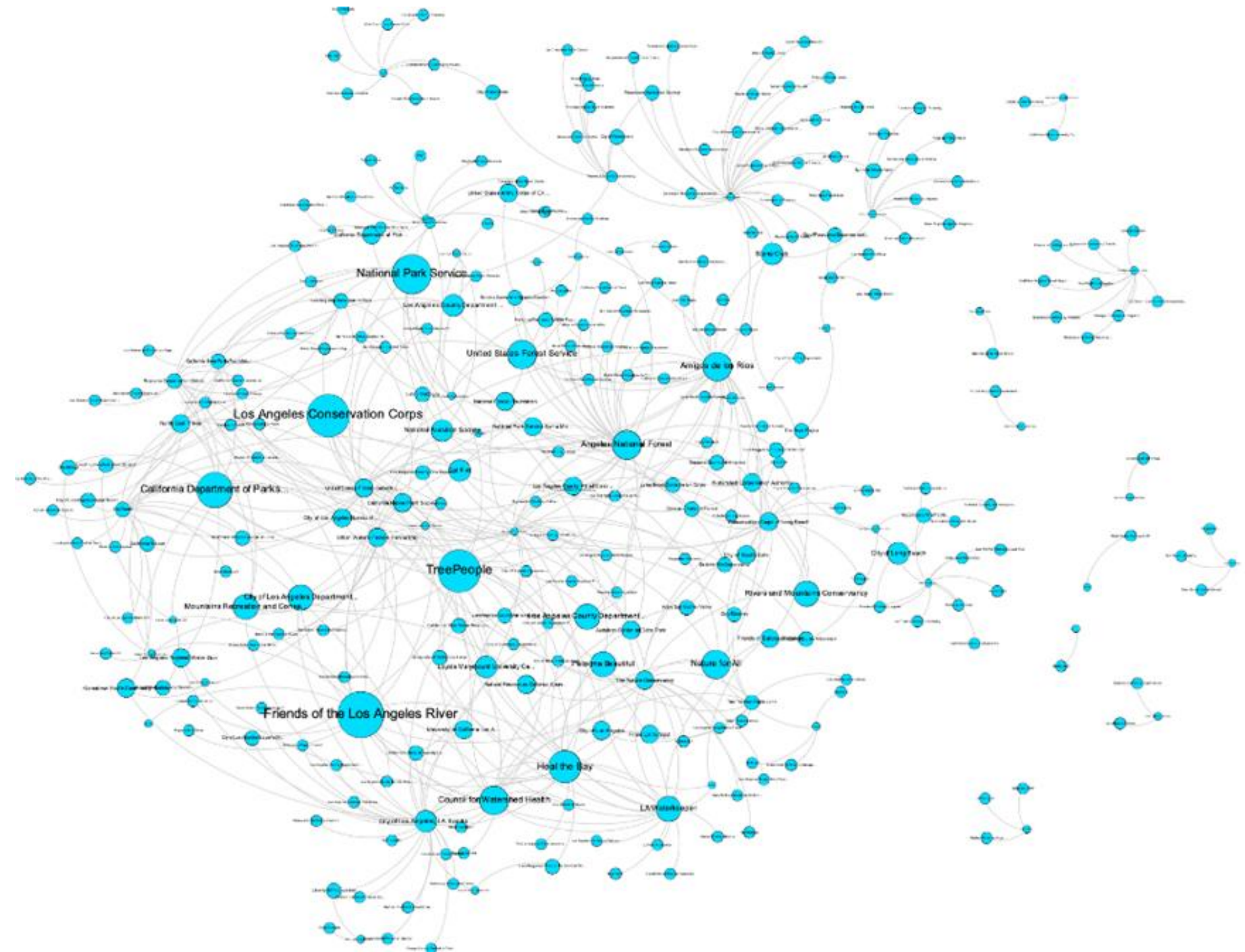
- Highest stewardship concentration was found in downtown LA around the LA River
- Other areas of high stewardship concentration were the northeastern area of the watershed, within the Angeles National Forest



# LA River STEW-MAP – Key Findings

## Network Relationships

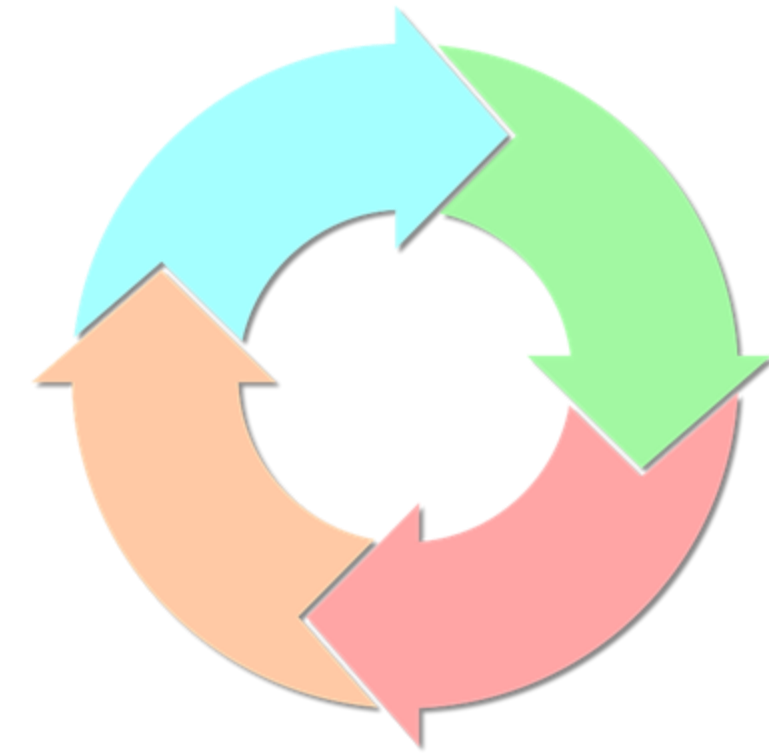
- Groups identified over 1200 collaborative, knowledge, or funding relationships
- The “hubs” of activity in the stewardship network were mostly 501(c)3 nonprofit groups, and government agencies from the local to the federal level





# VRWRP Survey – Next Steps

- **Survey Topics**
  - Organization Information
  - Existing Networks and Collaboration
  - Water & Climate Resilience
- **Advisory Group Feedback**
- **Advisory Group Testing**
- **Survey Launch**



# Networks and How They Work

Thinking About Networks

Mike Antos, PhD, ENV SP  
Principal Watershed Social Scientist



# People Networks are a Resilience Strategy

- Familiarity
- Trust
- “Knowing who to call...”



**People Networks ARE  
a Climate Adaptation**

**World Environment Day  
June 5, 2024**

**Facilitating the establishment of a  
Flood-MAR Network in California**

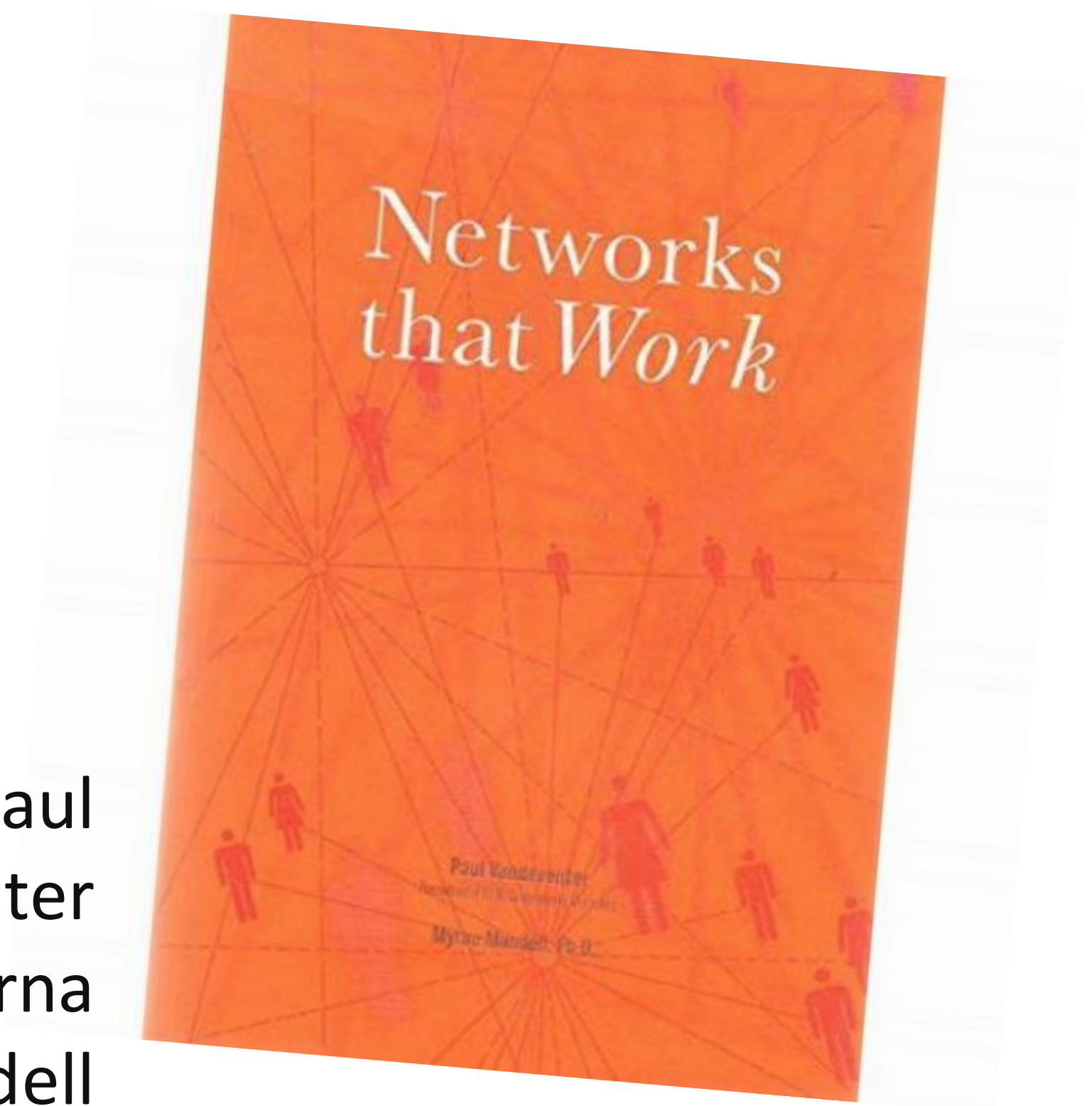
Acknowledgements to California Department of Water Resources, Jenny Marr, Orit Kalman, multiple Stantec colleagues including Marisa Perez-Reyes, and many Flood-MAR Network members.

What is a Network?

“Many different organizations working in concert around a common defined purpose as equal partners”

Not the same as an “organization”, which are members of networks.

Paul  
Vandeventer  
Myrna  
Mandell





## Why Network?

- Scale and focus
- Productive working relationships
- Lasting effectiveness and change

## How Network?

- Investment in new relationships
- Agreement for distributed leadership
- Members accept the risk of participation

## Network thinking

Tricks to engaging and thinking in Network terms.

1 This is not  
my day job!

2 What we do together  
IS NOT what we do  
separately

3 What we do together  
STRENGTHENS what  
we do separately

4 Where can  
something I have  
help someone else?

5 Who here can  
help me be  
better?

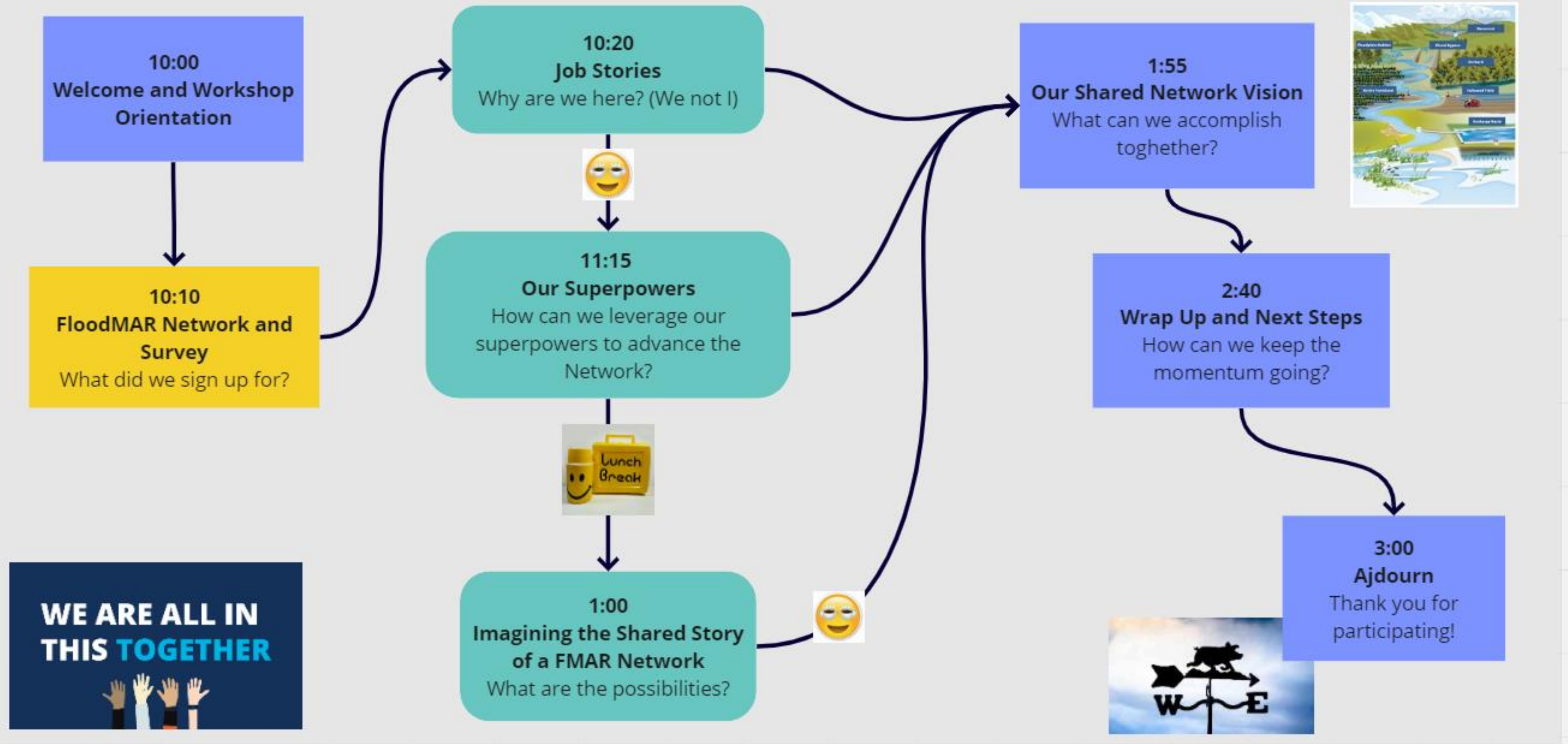
6 Becoming partners for  
our day jobs is not the  
same as being  
networked

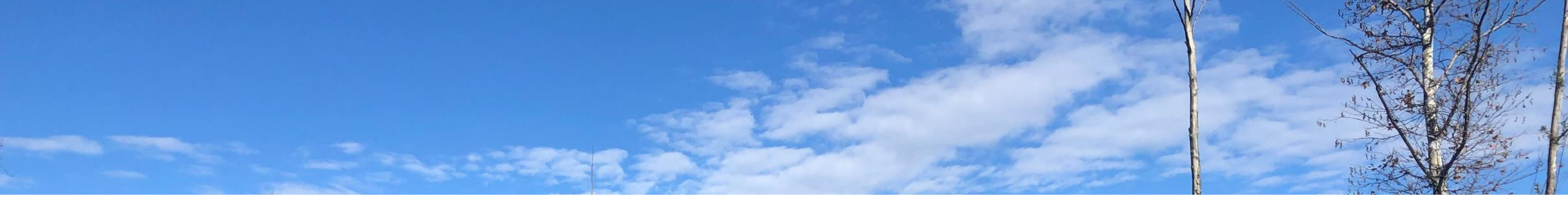


As a [role], I  
want to  
[action], so I  
can [achieve  
an outcome]

# People Networks

Our Plan for the Day





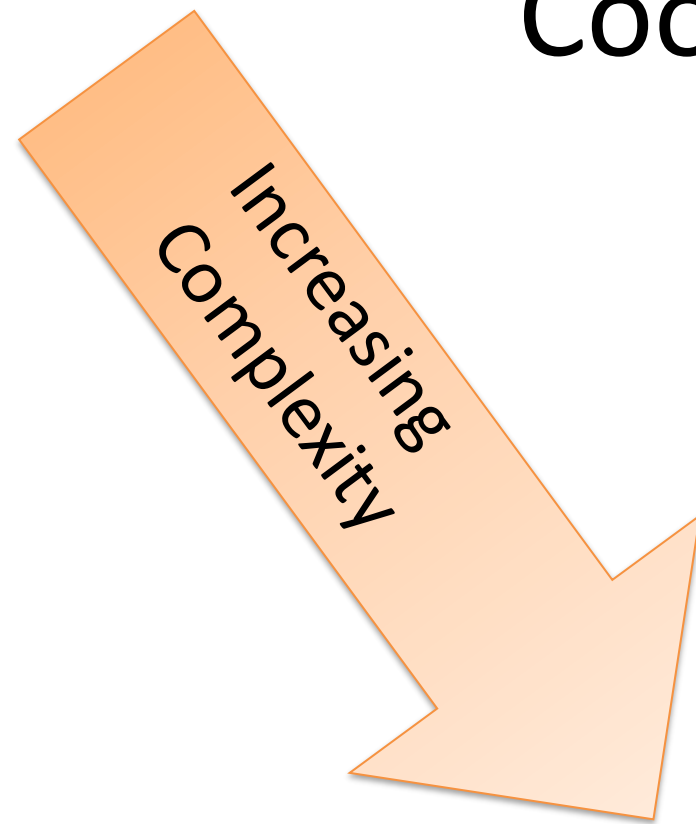
Network Complexity = Risk



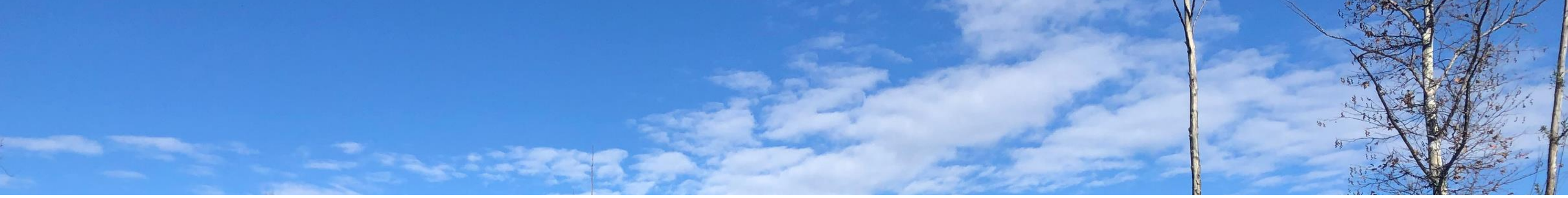
Cooperating Network

Coordinating Networks

Collaborating Networks







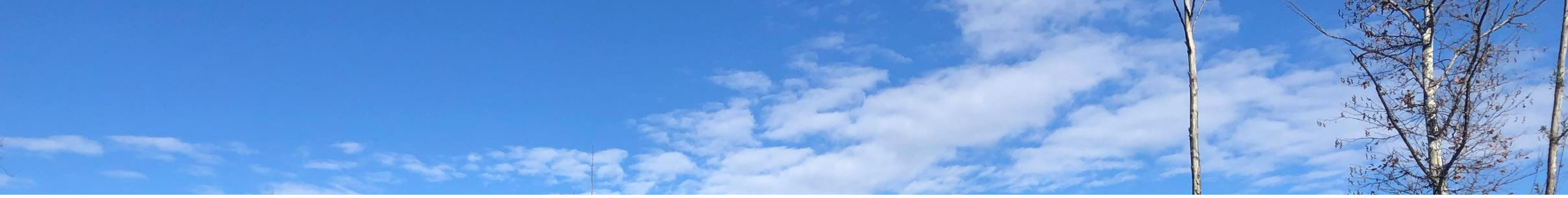
## Cooperating Network

- Lower risk, lower impact
  - Create conditions for better relationships
  - Space to explore new levels of trust
  - Model and explain best practices
  - Shared learning
  - Facilitate problem-solving




## Coordinating Network

- Low to moderate risk to members
  - Consensus identification and pursuit of priorities
  - Negotiate commitments amongst members
  - Change member boundaries based on new understanding of interdependence
  - Pursue multi-party efforts with mutual reliance



## **Collaborating Network**

- High stakes & risk, opportunity for high impact
  - Shared pursuit of long-term or transformational change
  - Processes for raising and overcoming conflict
  - Representation to enforce commitments to one-another
  - Shared authority despite unequal resource contributions (more from those who can...)
  - Commitment by members to change based on outcomes

- 
- Questions to ask when developing a network purpose statement:
    - Why am I interested in being part of a network? (GET)
    - What “superpowers” do I bring with me that can be leveraged by a network? (GIVE)
    - How does our individual work inform the definition of a collective purpose? (JOINT PROBLEM)
    - What is our shared story? (CONNECTIONS)
    - What can we accomplish as a network? (VISION OF OPPORTUNITY)

# Flood-MAR



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## Welcome to California's Flood-MAR Hub

A one-stop shop for people seeking information and support in developing and implementing Flood-MAR projects.

Kearney orchards recharge site studied by the UC Davis Dahlke Lab (Pasner, 2022).

## Who We Are

The Flood-MAR Network is a vibrant collaboration of individuals and organizations dedicated to promoting Flood-MAR implementation in California.



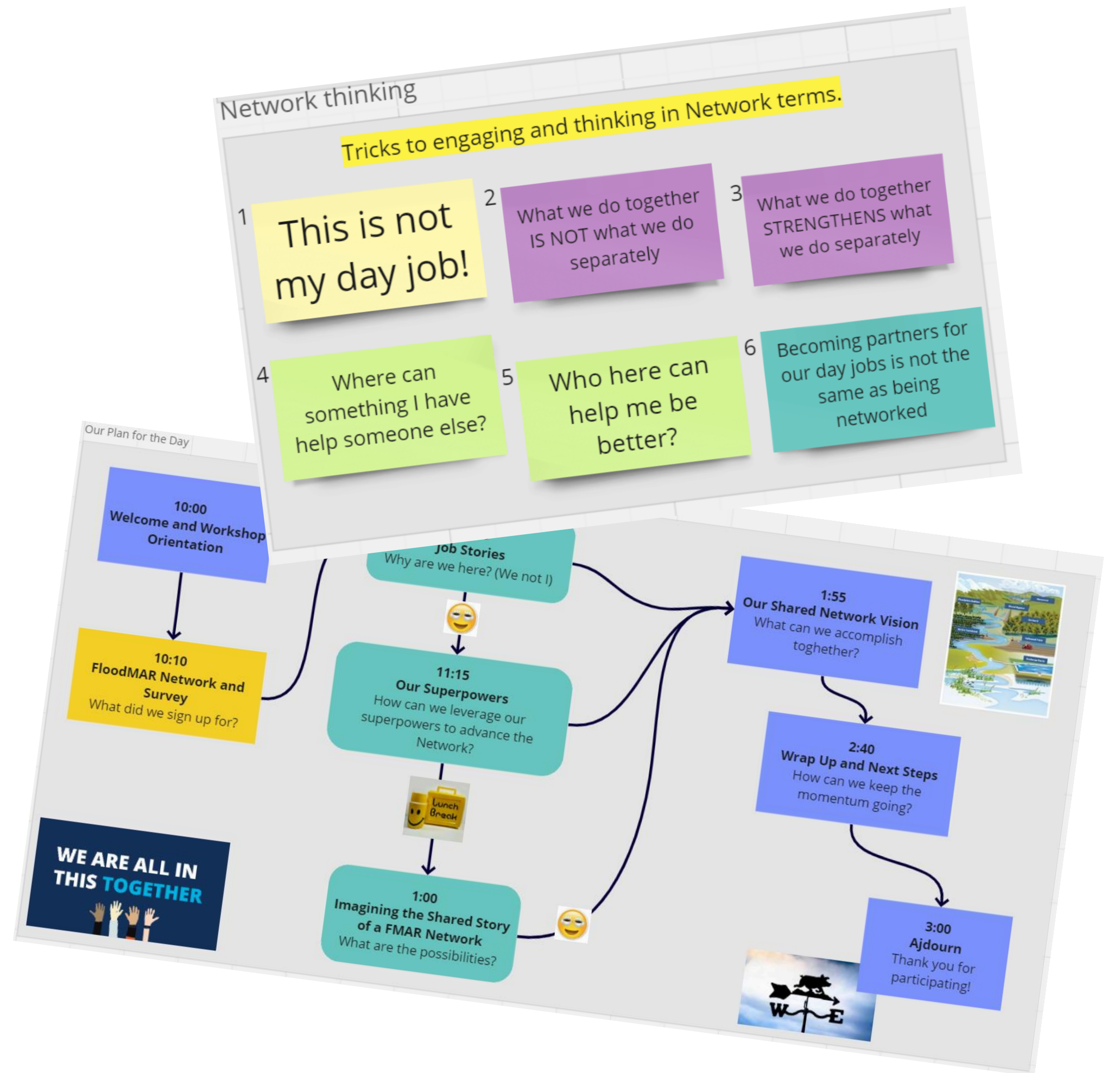
**FLOOD-MAR**  
**NETWORK**

**Hot off the Press!** [Read highlights](#) from the most recent biannual **Flood-MAR Network Forum Event**, held November 2023. We are building out a page on this site to share the recordings of the many excellent sessions from the Forum event – *coming soon!*

## Celebrating 5 Years of Flood-MAR!

The Flood-MAR Network's Coordinating Team has released a [short paper reflecting on and celebrating the past five years advancing Flood-MAR efforts](#). [Read the story](#) of how Flood-MAR moved from being a concept held and practiced by a few to being the organizing principle of the California Governor's Executive Order (EO) N-4-23.

This story is about managing complexity together, and how working together is the best way to overcome interconnected physical, social, and policy challenges. *We look forward to many more years working together to make Flood-MAR an essential water resources management and climate adaptation strategy!*



Thank you!

Mike Antos, PhD, ENV SP

Principal Watershed Social Scientist

# Advisory Group Roles and Protocols

## Purpose and Responsibilities

- **Advisors to the WRP consultants and the Watershed Council:** Provide guidance, technical and local knowledge.
- **Consensus-Based Recommendations:** Advisory Group provides guidance; the Watershed Council retains final decision-making authority (following the Watershed Council Charter for guidance)
- **Collaborative Guidance:** Enhance shared knowledge, promote transparent communication, trust-building, and cooperative action.
- **Equity and Inclusivity:** Reflect diverse watershed interests and ensure perspectives especially from underrepresented and vulnerable communities, are included.
- **Charter Review:** Provide recommendations on to the Leadership Council, especially on inclusivity, equity, and strengthening the network

# Advisory Group Roles and Protocols

Developing Our Advisory Group Code of Conduct

- Purpose:
  - Establish shared expectations collaboratively.
  - Ensure all members feel ownership and accountability.
- Examples:
  - *Treat others respectfully.*
  - *Encourage inclusive and respectful dialogue*
  - *Listen actively.*
  - *Participate actively.*
  - *Declare conflicts transparently*





# Advisory Group Roles and Protocols

Action Item: Review and approve draft *Advisory Group Roles and Protocols* guiding document

Option 1: Approve with edits and feedback provided today. We will incorporate changes, circulate a final version, and unless significant additional changes are requested it will be considered approved.

Option 2: Edits and feedback provided today are incorporated into a final draft that is brought back to the AG at the May 19 meeting for approval.

# Information Gathering for Water Budget Analysis

## Task 8 - Assess Vulnerabilities and Risks

- **Task 8.1 Prepare Updated Historical Water Budget**

*Engage with the Technical Workgroup to define existing models and their purpose, inputs, and outputs.*

*Work with Ventura RCD to develop and share information requests, as needed.*

## Known Hydrologic Data Sources and Analyses

- Groundwater-Surface Water Model for the Ventura River Watershed (GSFLOW) – State Water Board
- Upper Ventura River Groundwater Basin Groundwater Model (MODFLOW) – Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency
- Ojai Valley Groundwater Basin Groundwater model (MODFLOW) – Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency
- Ventura Surface Water Hydrology Model (VSWHM; HSPF) – Ventura County Watershed Protection District
- Ventura Water Allocation Model (VWAM; WEAP) – State Water Board

# Information Gathering for Water Budget Analysis (cont'd)

## Kickoff – Information Requests

- Point(s) of Contact for information/inquiries on hydrologic data sources and analyses
- Information on and points of contact for additional/applicable data or analyses for Ventura River Watershed water budget components
- Email request to Advisory Committee members for responses on above items forthcoming

## Next steps

- Compilation and review of hydrologic analyses performed in watershed.
- Coordination with Project Managers for potential future meetings with hydrologic analysis POCs to discuss:
  - Data availability and sharing
  - Modeling assumptions/considerations
  - Limitations/challenges and/or recommendations
  - Other considerations

# Watershed Resilience Vision and Goals Workshop

Purpose - Work with the watershed network to develop problem statements and establish the watershed resilience vision and goals to guide the development of the Watershed Resilience Plan

# Watershed Resilience Vision and Goals Workshop

**Location options** – Oak View Resource Center (available) - other options include Camp Arnaz, Camp Comfort

**Dates options** – April 24, 30, or May 1

- 2-3 hours starting at 2 or 4 pm
- Welcome & history of watershed
- **Activities:** defining the watershed's water systems, understanding the climate hazards, and crafting a draft vision statement
- Need AG help advertising the workshop



Request volunteer Advisory Group members to assist with planning.  
(we will try to keep it to one virtual meeting in April)





# Highlight of Work Completed

(read on your own)

- Secured agreement that the **Ventura River Watershed Council will serve as the Watershed Network**
- Convened **four Watershed Council meetings** (August, October, December, February) to support network development
- Submitted NAHC request for **updated Tribal contacts and initiated coordination** with Tribal members, including BVBMI Tribal Council, sent initial engagement letters, and separate questionnaire, participated in Watershed Resilience Program Tribal webinar hosted by DWR
- Met with **20+ watershed partner entities** to gain insights on climate risks and watershed resilience priorities
- Compiled **comprehensive list of interested parties/partners** for network assessment and foundational inventory of relevant studies and plans
- Finalized contracts and onboarded **Rincon and CSU** consultants
- Formed technical **Advisory Group** to support Watershed Council and WRP development
- Assessment of network decision-making structure ongoing - potential revisions to the Council charter
- Continual updates to project website
- Held **monthly and quarterly meetings with DWR** and engaged with **four WRP pilot watersheds** (Russian River, Calaveras River, American River, Pajaro River)

# **Tentative Schedule of Work Ahead March-May 2025**

- **Conduct 2 network meetings (April 3 and TBD Workshop)**
- **Prepare for and facilitate Vision and Goals Workshop**
- **Conduct Advisory Group Meeting – March 17th**
- **Onboard CAUSE to work with underserved communities**
- **Continue formal Tribal engagement phase – including option for bringing Tribal members on as paid advisors if so desired**
- **Activate engagement with underserved communities**