

Ventura River Watershed Resilience Project (WRP)

Advisory Group Purpose and Protocols

1. Introduction and Purpose

Introduction

The **Ventura River Watershed Council** (the “Council”) has a history of fostering collaboration and enhancing coordination among diverse watershed stakeholders. It has successfully advanced watershed health and sustainability, including through the development of the Watershed Management Plan and its participation in the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program.

This legacy makes the Council a strong foundation for the Ventura River Watershed Resilience Project (WRP), and provides an existing network to support collaboration, equity, and long-term sustainability in watershed resilience planning. The Council has been adopted as the broader network supporting watershed for the Watershed Resilience Project.

Purpose

The Council provides a framework for broad stakeholder engagement in watershed resilience planning, while a more focused Advisory Group was formed to provide collaborative guidance and recommendations that strengthen the WRP. The Advisory Group advises both the WRP technical consultant team and the Ventura River Watershed Council, which holds the final decision-making authority.

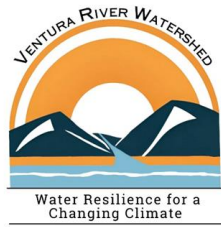
The Advisory Group was formed by vote of the Watershed Council’s Leadership Committee in January 2025. This document outlines the responsibilities and procedures for the Advisory Group, ensuring alignment with the Council’s existing structure and supporting equitable, collaborative, and sustainable watershed resilience planning.

2. Responsibilities

A. Advisory Group Responsibilities

Key Responsibilities and Guiding Principles:

- Provide consensus-based recommendations to:
 - The WRP technical consultant team, including affirming outputs and approach
 - The Council, which holds final decision-making authority for WRP adoption



Ventura River Watershed Resilience Project (WRP)

Advisory Group Purpose and Protocols

- Strengthen collaboration, elevate shared knowledge, and support equitable and sustainable decision-making for the watershed
- Ensure decisions reflect diverse watershed interests and geographic representation
- Provide recommendations to the Council at major milestones, including plan adoption and funding strategies
- Participate in Advisory Group meetings, Council meetings, workshops, focusing on issues such as establishing a baseline water budget, establishing climate risk scenarios, quantitative climate modeling approach, and refining implementation strategies.
- Provide timely response when requested input or feedback on materials is required to keep the project moving smoothly
- As part of the WRP network development the Advisory Group will review the existing Charter and provide recommendations for future changes to the Leaderships Committee and/or Council to strengthen inclusiveness, equity, and alignment with watershed management needs.

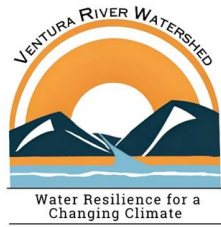
B. Watershed Council Responsibilities

The Watershed Council remains the public forum for sharing information and engaging diverse partners and interested parties in watershed issues. The Council plays a key role in the final review of the draft chapters of the WRP and major decisions through regular Council meetings and designated workshops.

- Council retains final decision-making authority on affirming the WRP, following the Council's Charter
- Council will approve, affirm, endorse, or adopt the WRP as determined by the Council
- Receive and consider AG recommendations
- Provide input and approval for WRP milestones and final documents.

3. Advisory Group Membership

The Advisory Group membership mirrors the Leadership Committee, and all current Leadership Committee members were invited to participate on the Advisory Group, ensuring balanced representation across key sectors and geographic area. Additional members were identified and added to ensure diverse and equitable representation.



Ventura River Watershed Resilience Project (WRP)

Advisory Group Purpose and Protocols

The membership categories include government (including Tribes), water & sanitation agencies, land management & recreation, environmental organizations, business & landowners, frontline communities & youth. See current membership list (*need to attach or insert*)

- Members are encouraged to designate an alternate to participate in their absence.
- Invited members may participate at any time, but participation is encouraged to be consistent to support continuity.
- At the conclusion of the project, the final Advisory Group list will reflect members who actively and consistently engaged and confirmed participation, while acknowledging those who were invited but did not choose to formally participate on the AG.

Chairperson: The Advisory Group Chair will be a member of the Watershed Council's Leadership Committee.

4. Decision-Making Procedures

A. Advisory Group Decision-Making

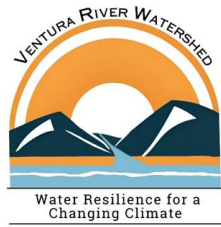
The Advisory Group will strive for **consensus-based approach to recommendations and decisions**, meaning all members either support or are neutral about a recommendation or decision, with no explicit opposition.

Routine decisions may be made by simple majority present, while other recommendations (priority setting, approval of draft chapters, framework endorsement, and strategic direction) require consensus.

When a recommendation is requested or formed, members will be asked if there is any disagreement. If consensus cannot be reached after all reasonable efforts, any disagreements will be noted to ensure constructive input is captured.

The recommendation process should include the following elements:

1. Issue/Item introduction with necessary background or supporting information.
2. Advisory Group discussion
3. Straw poll – is there consensus or is further discussion necessary to address concerns
4. Further discussion – if necessary



Ventura River Watershed Resilience Project (WRP)

Advisory Group Purpose and Protocols

5. Final recommendation, with any dissention noted

B. Watershed Council Decision-Making

The Council strives to make decisions by consensus, meaning all members either support or are neutral about a decision, with no explicit opposition. **Refer to the Ventura River Watershed Council's Charter for more details.**

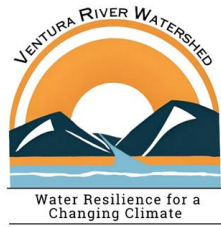
The Watershed Council will engage in consensus-based decision-making on key WRP milestones primarily at designated workshops. The Advisory Group will provide a recommendation to the Council on such decisions when asked. After considering Advisory Group recommendations, final decisions will be made by the Council following the decision-making procedures in the Charter. Dissenting views will be documented.

5. Code of Conduct

The Advisory Group is committed to fostering a collaborative and respectful environment to advance the WRP for overall watershed resilience. Members agree to:

- Treat others with respect, as you hope to be treated.
- Create a constructive positive space by encouraging idea sharing.
- Participate actively in meetings and discussions.
- Provide space for everyone to contribute by keeping their statements as brief and clear as possible and listening to and trying to understand one another's views.
- Members will search for opportunities to develop group solutions and to resolve conflicts.
- Provide advice that supports big picture, long-term thinking, and leads towards the most meaningful community and watershed benefits, not just achieving the minimum requirements.
- Allow audio/visual recording of meetings for purposes of generating meeting summaries and minutes, agree to these recordings being available to advisory group members, and WRP project managers, and commit to not sharing beyond the group.

6. Staff & Support



Ventura River Watershed Resilience Project (WRP)

Advisory Group Purpose and Protocols

The WRP project management team, including the Watershed Coordinator, provides staff support for the Advisory Group and facilitates WRP meetings.

WRP technical consultants and advisory consultants may assist in decision-making by providing non-biased expert advice and technical information.

7. Meeting Dates & Communication

The Advisory Group will meet at least six times per calendar year, every-other month, for the duration of the WRP. Meetings will be announced one week in advance via email and posted on the WRP website and the Watershed Council website. Advisory Group meetings are open to all Council members to observe or provide meaningful input following the Code of Conduct.

Smaller technical committees or work groups may meet as needed.

Proposed meeting dates in 2025:

March 17, 2:00pm – Decision-making structure, network assessment survey

May 19, 2:00 pm – Finalize vision and goals, climate scenarios

July 21, 2:00 pm – Water budget

September 15, 2:00 pm – Quantitative modeling

November 17, 2:00 pm – Prioritize strategies

January 19, 2:00 pm – Finalize implementation strategies