



Ventura River Watershed Resilience Pilot Project
Advisory Group Meeting #2
May 19, 2025
Virtual Meeting

Facilitators: Mike Antos, Lynn Rodriguez, Lara Shellenbarger

Attendees:

Advisory Group Members and Others:

- Bruce Kuebler, Ventura Water District
- Bryan Bondy, Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency
- Cameron Yee, CAUSE
- Carlie Dominguez, Native Coast Action Network
- Christopher Danch, Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council
- Christy Cooper, Meiners Oaks Water District (partial attendance)
- Jamie Whiteford, Ventura County Resource Conservation District (VCRCD)
- Heidi Ortloff, VCRCD, Ventura River Watershed Council
- Lauren Zaragoza, VCRCD
- Jodi Switzer, Farm Bureau of Ventura County
- Julie Tumamait-Stenslie
- Laura Pavliscak, Ventura Land Trust
- Nate Irwin, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
- Peter Shellenbarger, City of Ventura
- Sarah Mulder, City of Ventura, Ventura Water
- Scott Meckstroth, Ojai Valley Sanitation District
- Jennifer Tribo, City of Ventura
- Vivon Sedgwick, Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (Chair)

WRP Team & Consultants

- Lynn Rodriguez, WRP Project Manager
- Lara Shellenbarger, WRP Associate Project Manager
- Anna Yip, Rincon



Advisory Group Meeting #2 Meeting Summary

- Ben Chou, CGST, CSU Northridge
- Cameron Yee, CAUSE (also advisory group member)
- Colie Roman, Eagle Rock Analytics
- Mike Antos, Stantec
- Jamil Ibrahim, Stantec

Summary of Key Outcomes Related to WRP:

- The second Advisory Group (AG) meeting provided an update on multiple project elements, including recent public engagement at the first Forum, the partner network survey, and planned frontline community involvement.
- An update was provided on technical work on the watershed water budget. and climate hazard metrics.
- An overview of climate hazard metrics was discussed and AG members offered valuable feedback on climate impact thresholds, infrastructure concerns, and community well-being issues such as mental health and climate grief.
- A date was set for the second WRP Forum – July 30th in-person at Camp Arnaz

Meeting Agenda and Summary:

1. Welcome and Introductions:
 - Lynn introduced the meeting purpose: updating the group on engagement activities and seeking input on technical work related to climate metrics and the water budget.
 - Attendees introduced themselves via chat and verbally during the meeting.
2. Recap of AG Meeting on March 17
3. Vision Forum Recap – Lynn Rodriguez and Lara Shellenbarger
 - Lynn and Lara summarized the April 30 Vision Forum, held at Camp Arnaz. There were around 35 participants, and at least 6 Advisory Group members attended. The forum featured three interactive mapping and discussion activities related to how the water sectors of the Ventura River Watershed experience climate hazards. They noted the positive feedback from attendees. One activity was around the draft Vision Statement and the



feedback received from the forum and how it will be incorporated into a revised draft and shared with the Advisory Group soon.

- Workshop Reflections – Open Discussion – AG members shared reflections on the forum, including the value of in-person interaction, new community connections, and opportunities to better incorporate cultural heritage into resilience planning.
- Forum #2 – it was proposed to hold the next forum on Wednesday, July 30th at Camp Arnaz.

4. Network Assessment Survey Update – Ben Chou (CSU Northridge)

- Ben provided a progress update on the Watershed Network Assessment Survey (supporting Task 3). Approximately 20% of contacted groups completed the survey, with 12 more in progress. The survey results will help address the strength and composition of the watershed network and identify opportunities for deeper collaboration and equity-centered engagement.

5. Frontline Community Engagement Update – Cameron Yee (CAUSE)

- Cameron discussed CAUSE's planned focus groups and survey work targeting Spanish-speaking adults and English-speaking youth on the Westside of Ventura. This effort will incorporate climate priorities and lived experiences of frontline communities in the Watershed Resilience Plan. This work is expected to take place over the summer.

6. Water Budget Technical Update – Jamil Ibrahim (Stantec), Facilitated by Mike Antos

- Jamil shared that the team is using the State Water Board's integrated groundwater-surface water model for the historical water budget analysis (1993–2019 period). Group discussion included questions about groundwater use representation, model limitations, and inclusion of recent hydrologic extremes in the data period. There was discussion on the purpose of establishing an updated historical Water Budget for the WRP – it will serve as an agreed upon baseline. More discussion on the Water Budget and updates will be shared at the July 21st AG meeting.

7. Climate Scenario Levels and Metrics – Colie Roman (Eagle Rock Analytics),
Facilitated by Mike Antos

- Colie introduced a draft framework for evaluating climate hazards using scenario-based global warming levels (1.5°C, 2.0°C, 3.0°C).



- Colie asked for feedback from the AG on what baseline to use (0.8°C - 2002, 1.0°C - 2010, 1.2°C - 2020) (slide 25)
- She outlined proposed metrics and thresholds for each hazard:
- Drought: Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI < -1) was recommended.
- Wildfire: Fosberg Fire Index (FFI) was proposed to identify high fire-risk days. An AG member highlighted the importance of understanding local ignition patterns starting in the lower watershed, stressing the need for locally-informed management zones.
- Extreme Heat: Heat Index. It was suggested that 80°F and 95°F be used as relevant thresholds, particularly due to their significance for outdoor worker protections under Cal/OSHA.
- Extreme Precipitation and Flooding: Rainfall intensity thresholds such as 5 inches over 2 days were suggested, and using storm return intervals (e.g. 10-year and 100-year storm) relevant to infrastructure and water quality design standards and permitting.
- Water Quality Impacts: One participant emphasized the need to consider nutrient loading, sedimentation, and algae bloom dynamics in future analyses, particularly following high-intensity storm events. It was suggested that we should consider using the Ventura River Nutrient Transport Model with new climate data inputs as part of this analysis.
- Marine Stratus: Low cloud fraction was proposed as a proxy metric.
- Sea Level Rise: Scenarios of 25 cm, 50 cm, and 75 cm sea level rise were suggested with impacts on groundwater, shoreline position, and flooding risk.
- Additional input highlighted the importance of identifying infrastructure vulnerabilities such as levees, and incorporating both technical and community-informed thresholds. Participants also raised questions about how these metrics would translate into impacts on water systems and social well-being.
- Carlie Domingues called attention to climate grief and mental health as significant but often overlooked aspects of climate vulnerability. She shared insights from Indigenous research on the mental health effects of losing



Advisory Group Meeting #2 Meeting Summary

access to traditional resources such as salmon. The group recognized this as an important layer of resilience planning to be further explored.

8. Wrap Up – What's Next – Lynn Rodriguez, Lara Shellenbarger, and Anna Yip
 - The facilitation team summarized next steps and invited Advisory Group members to provide feedback on the climate metrics presentation by May 30. Anna noted that a draft “State of the Watershed” chapter would soon be shared for review. Advisory Group members were thanked for their time, engagement, and forthcoming review contributions. Reminders were given for the upcoming:
 - Advisory Group Meeting: **July 21, 2025**
 - In-Person Forum #2: **Tentatively July 30, 2025**

Action Items:

1. Lynn & Lara – Share slide decks and post-meeting materials on project website.
2. Lynn & Lara – Finalize Vision Statement draft with community feedback and share with AG.
3. Advisory Group Members – Submit feedback on climate metrics and the preferred baseline by May 30. (slides 25 & 41)
4. Rincon Team – Circulate draft chapter on watershed hazards and systems for review.
5. Lynn & Lara – Confirm July forum date and coordinate AG review of facilitation materials in advance.