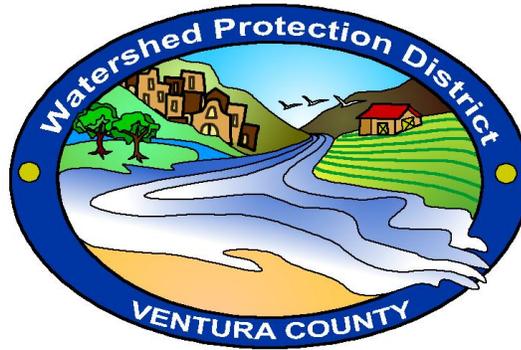
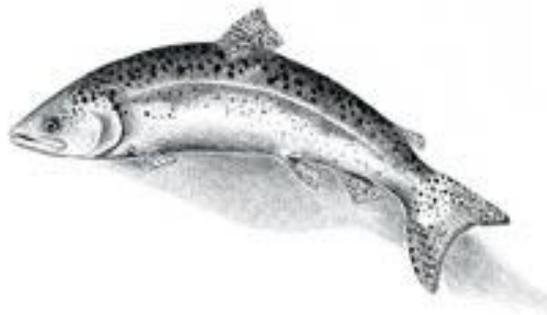




Ventura County Watershed Protection District



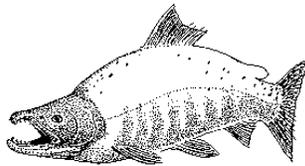
Site Handbook





Watershed Stewards Project Mission

The mission of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project is to conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices.



Sockeye Salmon



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Introduction

Site Description

Location The Watershed Protection District main office is housed at the Ventura County Government Center campus on the northeast corner of Victoria Avenue and Telephone Avenue in Ventura. There are also two maintenance facilities, one each in Saticoy and Moorpark.

Agency Affiliation The Ventura County Watershed Protection District (then known as the Ventura County Flood Control District) was formed on September 12, 1944, when the California State Legislature approved the Ventura County Flood Control Act. The District was formed, in part, to provide for the control and conservation of flood and storm waters and for the protection of watercourses, watersheds, public highways, life and property from damage or destruction from these waters. On January 1, 2003, the name was changed to the Ventura County Watershed Protection District to reflect changes in community values, regulatory requirements, and funding opportunities. The name change also reflected the District's desire to emphasize integrated watershed management and solve flood control problems with environmentally sound approaches. The District's mission is to protect life, property, watercourses, watersheds, and public infrastructure from the dangers and damages associated with flood and storm waters. Goals of the District include:

- Comprehensive, long range watershed planning
- Collaboration with watershed stakeholders
- Administration of adopted regulations, policies, and resolutions
- Responsible and accountable use of public resources
- Excellence in public service

The District's ongoing activities are funded through property taxes, benefit assessments, and land development fees. To facilitate management of revenues and projects, the District was divided into four zones, roughly corresponding to the major river systems in the county. Zone 1 essentially follows the boundaries of the Ventura River Watershed and coastal drainages in the western part of the county. Zone 2 basically follows the boundaries of the Santa Clara River Watershed and local coastal drainages in the cities of San Buenaventura and Oxnard. Zone 3 essentially follows the boundaries of the Calleguas Creek Watershed and its tributaries (non-anadromous fish watershed). Zone 4 is a mixture of Malibu coastal drainages in the southern part of the county and the relatively undeveloped Cuyama River Watershed in the northern part of the county. The District's website is: vcwatershed.org.

The District is an integral member of the Ventura County Watersheds Coalition and the Malibu Creek Watershed Council to explore solutions to watershed and water quality issues.

General Ecology Venturans share amenities found in other coastal communities, such as mountain views, uncrowded beaches, miles of bike paths and hiking trails, surf and boating opportunities, numerous historical sites and a mild year-round climate. Marine and beach resources, flashy streams, and rapidly uplifting mountains, support a variety of landscapes common in Mediterranean climates. Land uses include agriculture, urban development, light industry, and open space (beaches, foothills, and mountains).



General Calendar of Duties at Ventura County Watershed Protection District

<i>Month</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Site Duties</i>	<i>Work Load</i>	<i>Typical Work Hours</i>
Fall				
October	Office/Field	Resource agency contacts, data collection, watershed tours, outreach, monitoring	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
November	Office	Watershed Coalition meetings, research/data collection, outreach, monitoring	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
Winter				
December	Office/Field	Research, meetings, map ground truthing, report writing, presentations, monitoring, outreach	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
January	Office/Field	As above	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
February	Office/Field	As above	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
Spring				
March	Office/Field	As above	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
April	Office/Field	As above	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
May	Office/Field	As above	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
Summer				
June	Office/Field	As above	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
July	Office/Field	Restoration Master Plan presentations, outreach, monitoring	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30
August	Office/Field	Wrap up tasks, outreach, monitoring	Moderate	M-F, 8:00 – 4:30

Note: some volunteer duties will be scheduled for the weekends. Adjustments in the work week schedule would be made to accommodate such duties.



Description of Site Duties

*Restoration
Master Planning*

Restoration master planning is needed for the Ventura River, Santa Clara River, and Malibu Creek watersheds to ensure habitat resources are restored, preserved, and protected for the future. The Restoration Master Plan will identify and prioritize needs and opportunities for fish and wildlife restoration, land and resource preservation, and education in these watersheds. Local resources agencies and land conservancies have recently expressed an interest and need in this work.

The National Marine Fisheries Service issued the Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan (and summary) in January 2012. The Ventura River, Santa Clara River, and Malibu Creek watersheds are specifically targeted in the plan for restoration actions. The Restoration Master Plan will address many of the issues identified in the recovery plan to improve steelhead habitat.

The Restoration Master Plan is unique because it will provide an opportunity to act upon all the research conducted to date and develop a prioritized list of tasks that can be carried out by the variety of local stakeholders in series or simultaneously. The existing watershed groups have expressed an interest and need for this teamwork to result in a solid, executable product. AmeriCorps members would provide key communication, as well as data gathering and analyses for this goal. Grant applications for identified projects, if appropriate, would also be prepared by members.

Members will assist the District in composing a Restoration Master Plan by compiling and analyzing data and reports for the Ventura and Santa Clara River watersheds, and the Malibu Creek watershed. Information (fish surveys, vegetation maps, endangered species maps/reports, restoration project plans and reports, land use plans, CEQA documents, etc.) from resource agencies, land conservancies, planning agencies, private entities, and others will be synthesized to generate priority sites for restoration activities. Data gaps would also be identified and filled by the members, as appropriate, to complete the master planning tasks. Members would assist in setting up meetings with stakeholders and data providers, provide strategies for restoration types, locations, priorities, schedules, and entities to conduct restoration work. The final product will be a series of GIS maps and a report identifying priority sites for restoration activities.

Members would attend and work on restoration master plan tasks that would involve the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (watershedscoalition.org), including the Ventura River Watershed Council (venturawatershed.org) the Santa Clara River Watershed Committee (watershedscoalition.org), and the Santa Clara River Parkway Project (santaclarariverparkway.org). Other entities and those associated with the Malibu Creek watershed would also be contacted by members.

*Restoration Site
Monitoring*

Members would assist the District in measuring the progress of field conditions at more than 30 restoration sites. Native and non-native vegetation cover transects, wildlife use, and tree survivorship and height must be conducted annually and reported per regulatory requirements. In addition, periodic site inspections to note weed control, irrigation, and other site requirements will be conducted by members. Development of new restoration plans may also be prepared by members.

*Water Quality
Monitoring*

Monitoring of our watersheds provides information on not only the health of the ecosystem, but also what may be causing impairments. This information can help guide a program to address these causes and educate the public on solutions.



Members will assist with water quality, water quantity, and bioassessment data collection, including sample collection, field observations, and equipment use and maintenance.

Education and Outreach

The Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program (Program) has been conducting public outreach with a youth component for many years. The Program has gained a strong knowledge about developing effective youth outreach programs, and has built relationships with school staff and administrators through these efforts. Staff is needed to meet with schools and students to implement an in-school program.

Both water quality monitoring and educational outreach are ongoing efforts of the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program (Program) that could be easily expanded with the help of members. We conduct public outreach and stormwater pollution prevention campaigns through television, radio, and outdoor advertising. Currently the Program does not conduct an in-school educational outreach program due to the labor intensive effort needed. No school curriculum has been developed, but we do have brief presentations on the impacts of polluted runoff that could be adapted for K-12. We would like to have more of a presence in schools and feel that the WSP's *Real Science* program is a good opportunity to develop that presence. Members would meet and coordinate with schools and implement an in-school program.

Members would attend and work on community outreach tasks that would involve the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County, including the Ventura River Watershed Council and the Santa Clara River Watershed Committee, as well as the Malibu Creek Watershed Council. The Nature Conservancy, Santa Clara River Watershed Conservancy, and the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy are active in the area and would provide additional community outreach and volunteer opportunities for education and restoration in the region. The California Coastal Commission is also active in the County contributing to the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project and the Santa Clara River Parkways Project.

Volunteer Leadership

Members would work with local conservancies and non-profits to develop and implement volunteer projects, with the assistance of the District. Members would attend and work on community recruitment tasks that would involve the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County, including the Ventura River Watershed Council and the Santa Clara River Watershed Committee. The Nature Conservancy, Santa Clara River Watershed Conservancy, and the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy are active in the area and would provide additional community outreach and volunteer opportunities for education and restoration in the region. Opportunities to recruit college students would occur through the California State University Channel Islands and the University of California at Santa Barbara environmental studies programs. The District has ties to both of these campuses and has participated in Career Days or provided professional development opportunities to students from these campuses.



ISPs and Outreach Events

ISP Information

With the number of local non-profit groups and conservancies in the County, there will be many opportunities for Individual Service Projects. The District works closely with these groups and can facilitate projects serving both watershed restoration goals and WSP task requirements.

Outreach Information

In the Description of Site Duties (above), many community, agency, and conservancy groups within the County hold a variety of outreach and event functions throughout the year. Upon arrival, members will assemble a matrix of these opportunities in order to sort and select outreach tasks to pursue.

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors meetings, city council meetings for the 10 cities, and a variety of utility entity meetings are available both on line and as live meetings for members to learn about the community.

Routinely scheduled events, such as farmer's markets, art fairs, job fairs, the County Fair, and others provide opportunities for outreach via booths or tables.

Calendar of Outreach Events for Site / Community (Optional)

The following is a partial list of potential events. Many others would be available.

<i>April</i>	Earth Day events
<i>Varies</i>	Community Cleanup Events
<i>October</i>	Rain Barrel education/sale event (County Integrated Waste Management Department)
<i>Varies</i>	Conservancy and non-profit meetings and events



Education

Education Notes

The education program would focus primarily on water quality issues, but could also include general habitat issues such as plant identification, ecology basics, and other areas of interest. The members would work closely with the supervisor and mentors to create a curriculum and class targets to fulfill mutual goals.

Site / Region Specific Education Resources

Ventura County has the full complement of schools, from pre-schools through high school, as well as two community colleges and a state university.



Local Ecology

Descriptions of Local Ecology

General Information

Ventura County lies within the western Transverse Ranges in California, an active tectonic region that contributes some of the highest creek sediment yields in the United States. The range is composed almost entirely of highly folded and faulted, unmetamorphosed marine sedimentary rocks of Cenozoic and late Mesozoic age, elevated out of the ocean primarily along faults.

In this Mediterranean climate, the winters are wet and the summers dry. Most of the rain falls between the months of November to April. In general, the higher elevations receive more rain. The average annual rainfall for the mountainous areas can be 25 inches per year while the average annual rainfall near the mouths of the streams is approximately 14 to 16 inches per year. Few years actually receive “average” amounts of rainfall. The annual variation is great and cyclical often with dry years alternating with very wet years.

Vegetation within the County is adapted to these regional rainfall conditions; the primary native plant growth occurs in the winter and spring, with many species dormant in summer. Primary plant communities include grasslands, oak woodlands and forests, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, riparian scrub and forests, open rocky or sandy stream channels, and at the higher elevations, remnant conifer forests. Most streams are ephemeral or intermittent; few have naturally perennial surface flows. Nearly all lakes are man-made and many stream reaches receive perennial effluent from waste water treatment plants. Several tidally influenced lagoons and estuaries occur along the coast, primarily at the mouths of the main rivers and urban drains.

The varied habitat resources support a multitude of wildlife, including many threatened and endangered species. Large carnivores inhabit the wildlands, including the wildland interface with the urban environments. A diverse assemblage of birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates occur here, all providing essential ecosystem functions.

Ventura River

The Ventura River Watershed, located in the western portion of Ventura County, comprises an area of approximately 223 square miles of which almost half is within the Los Padres National Forest. The Ventura River drains the coastal watershed and has several major tributaries including Matilija Creek, North Fork Matilija, San Antonio, Coyote Creek and Cañada Larga. Matilija Creek is one of the largest tributaries to the Ventura River. The watershed topography is characterized by rugged mountains in the upper basins transitioning to relatively flat valleys in the lower downstream areas. Over 75 percent of the Ventura River Watershed is classified as rangeland covered with shrub and brush and 20 percent of the basin is classified as forested. In general, the highest sediment-producing parts of the watershed are those covered in shrub and brush and are located in the upper parts of the watershed where slopes are greater and annual rainfall is larger. The maximum elevation in the watershed is 5,457 feet above sea level in the Santa Ynez Mountains. The natural resources within the watershed are home to more than 26 special-status species, including the southern steelhead.

(Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Final Report Main Report, September 2004)

Santa Clara River

Originating 84 miles from the Pacific Ocean in Los Angeles County, the Santa Clara River has a tributary area of more than 1,600 square miles. Approximately 40 percent of the watershed is located in Los Angeles County, including major tributaries such as



Castaic Creek and San Francisquito Creek. The other 60 percent lies in Ventura County, with the major tributaries comprising Sespe, Piru, and Santa Paula Creeks. (*Santa Clara River Enhancement & Management Plan 2004*)

The Santa Clara River is one of the largest rivers in southern California in a relatively natural state. Few dams and other man-made features have altered its overall shape, size, and functionality. However, water diversion and pumping, agricultural activities, urbanization, and invasive plant species have reduced the overall health of the ecosystem.

The Santa Clara River has both intermittent and naturally perennial (or nearly perennial) reaches. Riparian forests occur on the latter, while the former appear as open sandy or cobble substrate channels. Wildlife include many threatened and endangered species, including the southern steelhead, least Bell's vireo, and southwestern willow flycatcher.

*Malibu Creek
Watershed*

The Malibu Creek Watershed includes approximately 109 square miles of the Santa Monica Mountains and western Los Angeles areas. Malibu Creek and its tributaries drain into the Santa Monica Bay via Malibu Lagoon. Only a portion of the upper watershed lies within Ventura County, including Lake Sherwood, Medea Creek, Potrero Creek, and Westlake Lake.

The Santa Monica Mountains area has increased in urban and rural development in the past 20 years, including many large lot estates with vineyards and equestrian uses. Large open spaces, such as the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the Malibu Creek State Park, provide recreation opportunities to the urban residents and sustain intensive use.

Despite these encroachments, the Malibu Creek and lagoon areas provide habitat for species such as the southern steelhead, tidewater goby, and many special-status birds. Large carnivores are actively tracked by the Urban Carnivore project and the National Recreation Area biologists.



Housing and Local Resources

Housing Contact List

Rental Discounts http://www.coastalhousing.org/rental_housing_benefits.htm. The County is a member of the Coastal Housing Partnership and as such, has negotiated rental and home purchase discounts for employees. WSP members may qualify for this program.

CSUCI The California State University at Channel Islands has generated a market for student housing. These resources may also be available for WSP members.

Local Resource Contacts

City and County websites have a variety of information regarding housing and resources available to citizens.

Craigslist is a useful tool for just about anything one might need or be interested in, from housing to furniture to events. www.craigslist.org.



Community Information

Map of Area

The Visitor Guide at http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/cm/ventura_vg2011/#/0 provides a thorough view of the county information. Google maps, or maps through the Automobile Association of Southern California can provide extensive information about interest areas in the county.

Community Demographics

Ventura County has a diverse population. The basic census information is available at:
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06111.html>

Community Services

The County and Cities have a variety of government and non-profit groups providing community services. Members may look into both receiving services as well as volunteering to provide services. Several websites are provided below.

Ventura County Human Services Agency: www.vchsa.org/

Ventura Community Services Department: www.cityofventura.net/cs

Ventura County Community Foundation: www.vccf.org/programs/non-profit_leadership/services.shtml

Places to volunteer: voices.yahoo.com/places-volunteer-ventura-county-175174.html



Entertainment and Community Events

Resources for Affordable Entertainment Options

In addition to 'groupon' and 'living social' there are many websites with entertainment options (see below). Hiking, biking, and surfing are the most popular recreation options and are low or no cost for most parking/trailheads.

www.ventura-usa.com/things-to-do/

www.ventura-usa.com/

www.fun-in-ventura.com/fun-cheap-things-to-do.html

Recurring Event List

Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Thousand Oaks all have major events on an annual basis. By visiting their websites, one should be able to find these activities. Also, lists of activities are available to subscribers to the local newspapers, the Ventura County Star or Ojai Valley News. A local free paper, the Acorn, also lists local events.



Helpful Hints

Ventura County Government Center

The campus is located in a hub of the City of Ventura with easy access to freeways and main public transportation routes. Within walking distance (across the street) are medical resources, banks, gas stations, groceries, restaurants, apartments, homes, churches, day-care, and anything else you might need. The campus includes the local jail and courthouse, as well as most of the administrative functions for the County services. Parking is free and plentiful. The administration building even has a nurses station for minor issues and health check-ups.

The District provides vehicles for both off-road and meeting needs.

The cost of living here is a bit higher than most places in California, perhaps comparable to some of the Bay Area locations, but well worth it for the wonderful weather and recreation opportunities.

Attachments

Contact Lists

Ed Logs & Information

ISP Logs & Information

Outreach Summaries & Information

Site Protocols & Information

Site Forms