

Watershed Coordinator Quarterly Report

A Project of Safe, Clean Water L.A.

Watershed: Santa Clara River
Watershed Coordinator: TreePeople
WC Contact: petermassey@treepeople.org

Quarterly Report No: 3
Contract Year: 1
Date of Submission: 3/28/2022
Notice to Proceed: 5/18/21
Period Covered: 12/1/21 to 2/28/22

A. Summary of Activities

Following is a summary of activities completed during our third quarter and progress made toward completion of the annual scope of work. TreePeople is honored and grateful to serve as Coordinator for the Santa Clara River Watershed Area, and to having been selected in January for a second contract year (beginning April 27, 2022).

1. Strategies used to integrate priorities for the community, municipalities, the watershed area, and the region

Continuing our year-one strategy of focusing on unincorporated communities in the watershed, (recognizing them as traditionally under-represented areas in terms of water related services), TreePeople moved further on project development for these areas, leveraging resources through the WaterTalks program discussed below.

We've also used these projects to organize engagement, including tapping into networks focused on Santa Clara River watershed health and management, as well as tribal interests in our area.

The above activities draw on our established strategies from the SOEP:

- *Build diverse relationships that support project identification and ongoing coordination.*
- *Draw from relationships to identify projects that serve community needs and SCWP goals.*
- *Focus community involvement on project development.*
- *Clarify educational needs that support understanding of how projects support shared goals.*
- *Share information through a regular public reporting structure.*

2. Partnerships and networks engaged

We continued work on leveraging resources from the Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Program (WaterTalks); we drew on results of an October design workshop of new

project identification and supported further work on seven project sketches for the SCR Watershed Area. Sketches were completed in January. Through our process, two projects were identified for a special funding opportunity through Department of Water Resources and were presented to the WaterTalks Task Force for consideration in January. They are:

- Rural Water Supply Reliability (Acton/Agua Dulce) – providing short-term drought relief and long-term assessment and planning for domestic well communities.
- Arundo Mapping and Priority Removal – additional funding and capacity for a collaborative program to strategically map, prioritize and remove Arundo donax from the river and its tributaries.

Project Sketches for these are included as attachments to this report.

We met with multiple partners from the **Invasive Weed Task Force** involved in Arundo removal efforts including the Santa Clara River Conservancy, UC Santa Barbara, Ventura County Resource Conservation District and the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency.

A complementary network we've also been welcomed into is the **Steelhead Trout Coalition**. By using a lens of saving/maintaining trout habitat, they address a variety of watershed health, management and policy issues. We shared information about SCWP with these entities and will continue to monitor and support their efforts. Partners include NOAA Fisheries, Los Padres NF, UC Santa Barbara, SCR Conservancy, US Fish Wildlife Service, CA Dept Fish and Game, Ventura County, and Friends of Santa Clara River. While many of these entities are in Ventura County and outside the SCWP service areas, they are working toward the watershed health of the entire river, and support and carry out programs in LA County.

Another major network continues to be the **collective of Watershed Coordinators across the SCWP**. We attended monthly Coordinator meetings throughout the quarter and supported other Coordinator's efforts.

3. Engagement of conventional and unconventional stakeholders

CA Native American Tribes: Meetings with the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians led to a request by Tribal President Rudy Ortega, Jr. to focus our attention on the Tataviam Land Conservancy; an initial meeting was very productive, and it appears we can assist with project development and are very excited to do so.

Conservation Districts: Other engagement of note included multiple meetings with the Antelope Valley Resource Conservation District, and exploration on possible funding opportunities, as well as the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, who due to recent redistricting has a small area in the Watershed where they can provide programs.

Finally, reports on our activities were provided to the WASC as well as Town Council leaders throughout the period.

B. Engagement Meetings Held or Attended

Summary (required elements)

Element	Minimum	This Qtr.	Total YTD
Engagement meetings held	4	8	12
Educational events held	2	0	1
Other meetings attended	0	7	33
Cost-share partner relationships	0	8	15
Leveraged funding pursuits	0	0	1

Detail

	Meeting or Event	Date	Summary of Meeting or Event	Stakeholders Engaged	Held or Attended?	ATTCH #
1	Steelhead Trout Coalition	12.2.21	Federal programs affecting SCR	NGO/institution representatives	Attended	
2	Agua Dulce/Acton representatives	12.6.21	Research on Water Resilience Project	Representatives	Held	
3	Antelope Valley Resource Cons. District	12.16.21	SCWP Briefing; Interested Party Network	Staff	Held	
4	Watershed Area Steering Committee SCR	1.6.22	Six-month report; contract renewal	Committee Members, public	Attended	B1 WASC PowerPoint
5	Santa Clara River Conservancy +	1.12.22	Discuss funding needs for Arundo Removal project	Arundo Study Group members	Held	
6	Agua Dulce Town Council	1.12.22	Provided report on SCWP	TC members, public, local agency reps	Attended	
7	RCD of Santa Monica Mtns	1.13.22	SCWP Briefing; Interested Party Network	Staff	Held	
8	Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI); Tataviam Land Conservancy (TLC)	1.27.22	SCWP Briefing; project need / identification	Staff	Attended	
9	USCR IRWM Stakeholders Group	1.27.22	LA County Water Plan – advocacy for USCR needs (Task 5)	IRWM leaders, public	Attended	
10	Santa Clara Valley Water Agency	2.1.22	Briefing / feedback on 3 projects	R Viergutz, S Cole	Held	B2 SCR 3 Project Sketches
11	Antelope Valley RCD	2.2.22	CAL FIRE funding project brainstorm	D. Grooms	Held	
12	Santa Clara River Conservancy	2.4.22	Confirm SCRC as lead applicant for Drought funding	SCRC staff	Held	

13	Agua Dulce Town Council	2.9.22	Provided update report on SCWP	TC members, public, local agency reps	Attended	
14	FTBMI; TLC	2.18.22	SCWP Briefing; project need / identification	Staff	Attended	
15	Santa Clara River Conservancy	2.24.22	Prep for Drought applicant mtg	SCRC staff	Held	

C. Potential Cost-Share Partners Contacted

	Potential Partner Name	Date First Contacted	Project name / type	Nature of potential partnership	ATTCH #
1	LA/Ventura Area DACIP Task Force	1.12.22	Rural Water Supply Reliability, Arundo Mapping & Removal	Funding via CA Urban Drought Relief & Multi-benefit Program	
2	LACFCD	12.13.21	Acton Flooding Multi-Benefit Solution	Project Management	
3	Antelope Valley Resource Cons. District	12.16.21	Rural Water Supply Reliability	Project elements funded through DWR Prop 1 IRWM	
4	Council for Watershed Health	1.24.22	Arundo Mapping & Removal	Funding via private foundation grant	
5	USCR IRWM Stakeholders Group	1.27.22	Rural Water Supply Reliability, Arundo Mapping & Removal	Funding via CA Prop 1 IRWM Round 2	
6	LA/Ventura Area DACIP Task Force	2.9.22	Rural Water Supply Reliability, Arundo Mapping & Removal	Funding via CA Urban Drought Relief & Multi-benefit Program	
7	USCR IRWM Stakeholders Group	2.16	Rural Water Supply Reliability, Arundo Mapping & Removal	Funding via CA Prop 1 IRWM Round 2	
8	USCR IRWM Stakeholders Group	2.23	Rural Water Supply Reliability, Arundo Mapping & Removal oval	Funding via CA Prop 1 IRWM Round 2	

D. Leveraged / Outside Funding Pursued

	Potential Outside Funding Source	Status or Outcome of the Pursuit	ATTCH #
1	Prop 1 IRWM Round 2	Review of project ideas for eligibility; build application timeline	
2	CA Urban & Multi-benefit Drought Relief Program / DACIP	Review of project ideas for eligibility; build application timeline	
3	Council for Watershed Health	Review of other Arundo Mitigation w/Santa Clara River Conservancy for future funding opportunities	

E. Detailed Progress Report

Task #	Task Name	LOE per Work Plan	LOE this period*	LOE YTD	Adj*
1	Facilitate Community Engagement in SCWP	20%	38%	59%	56%
2	Identify and Develop Project Concepts	20%	28%	15%	16%
3	Work with Technical Assistance Teams	10%	0%	0%	0%
4	Facilitate, ID and Represent Community Priorities	10%	8%	6%	6%
5	Integrate Priorities Through Partnerships / Networks	10%	6%	1%	1%
6	Cost-Share Partners	5%	9%	2%	3%
7	Leverage Funding	5%	0%	0%	0%
8	Local Stakeholder Education	10%	3%	4%	4%
9	Watershed Coordinator Collaboration	10%	8%	11%	12%
	Overall	100%	105%	92%	98%

**The average assumes 10 full months of work and is how reports and invoices have been filed through Stantec. The NTP was May 18 - equaling 9.4 months through February. The final column provides an adjustment to 9.4 months for comparison.*

F. Engagement efforts benefitting Disadvantaged Communities

As previously shared, TreePeople prioritized outreach efforts during the period on unincorporated communities in the Watershed Area. These areas are considered “underrepresented” by the WaterTalks program, and such a view was confirmed by WASC members and other community leaders as we prepared the SOEP. TreePeople did not otherwise engage with communities defined as disadvantaged by SCWP during the period but will during subsequent Quarters.

G. Scheduling concerns or issues

There were no scheduling concerns during this period. With TreePeople renewal beginning April 27, CY1 will be a total of 11 months rather than 12, likely resulting in a budget savings.

H. Expected activities next quarter

- Completion of CY 1. The final “quarter” of CY1 will be two months (March/April).
- Support development of projects and programs in coordination with the WaterTalks program.
- Submittal of outside funding applications for 1-4 projects.
- Hold 2 Education events.



Source: Nature Conservancy

Acton Flooding Multi-Benefit Solution

Project Location or Range

Acton, CA

Known or Potential Lead Applicant

County of Los Angeles Dept of Public Works

Supervisory District(s) and IRWM Subregion(s)

Fifth District 5; Upper Santa Clara River IRWM

Known or Potential Partner(s)

Acton Town Council and Council of Watershed Health

Project Type

Planning, Design, and Construction

Project Components

- Flood Reduction
- Groundwater Recharge
- Nature Based Solutions
- Native Plants
- Water Quality
- Park Retrofit

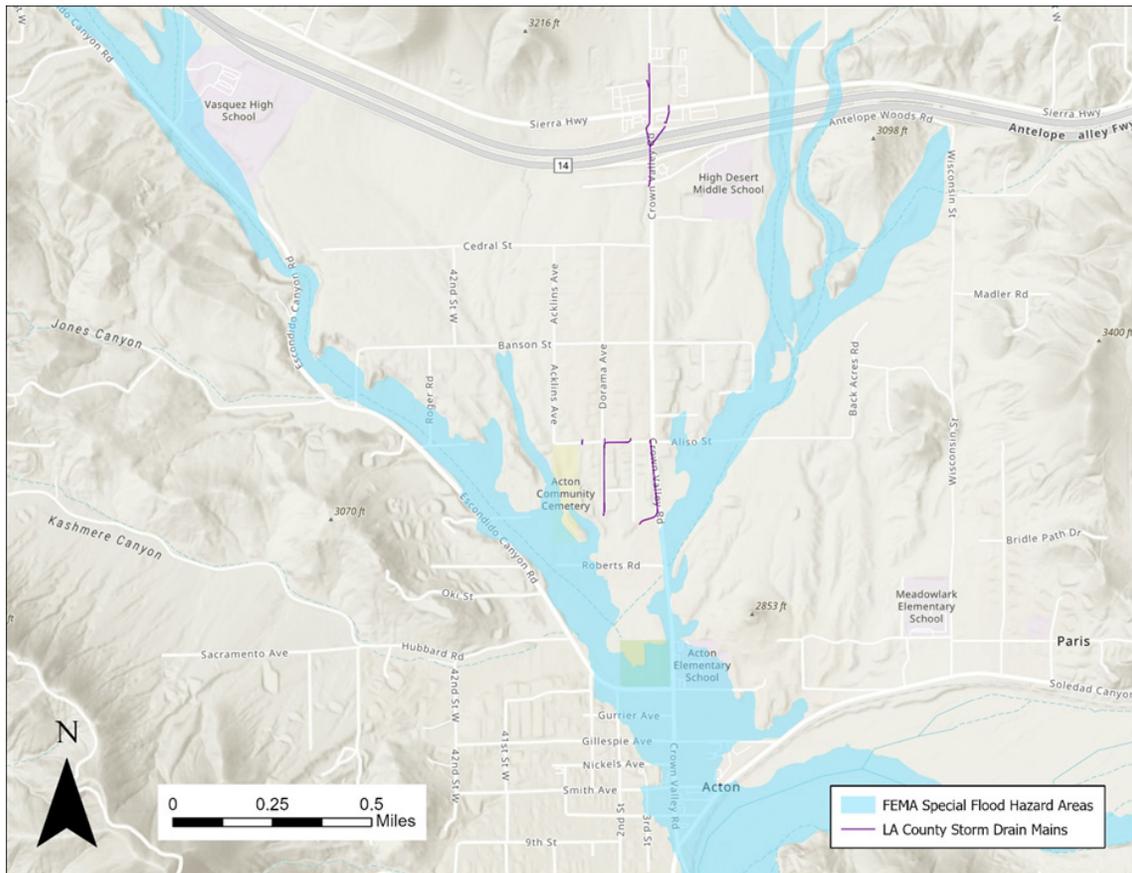


Figure 1. Existing Conditions in Acton

Genesis of Project Idea

Community members in Acton expressed a concern over local flooding and through the Acton Town Council are encouraging implementation of various green infrastructure installations. The Acton Town Council approached the LA County Department of Public Works about local concern with flooding, and the desire to use green infrastructure and groundwater recharge solutions. During an October 2021 meeting with the Acton Town Council the Flood Control District reviewed ideas proposed in Acton including a draft Water Master Plan developed in 1995 including several alternatives. The County plans to revisit the recent investigation of a storm drain main (PD 1709) and evaluate a potential detention basin at Acton Park.

Description

Downtown Acton has limited drainage infrastructure and is situated at the natural confluence of five intermittent streams that typically flow during and immediately after storm events and drain into the Santa Clara River. Figure 1 shows that the entire southern downtown portion of Acton sits in a Special Flood Hazard

Area with drainage primarily along Crown Valley Road. This leads to concentrated flooding that blocks the intersection of Crown Valley Road and Soledad Canyon Road. This flooding causes damage to private and public property, increases risk to injury, and negatively impacts water quality downstream. The town council has advocated for a nature-based solution installed in this area to attenuate these flows and capture stormwater for infiltration into the local aquifer. The proposed locations for project sites are based on the highest amount of water capture, proximity to FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas and reported locations of flooding and community support. Potential project types and locations shown in Figure 2 are the following:

- Sediment Forebay and Infiltration Basin in Acton Park to attenuate frequent storm volumes, remove sediment from flows and infiltrate stormwater to replenish local groundwater supply. Note that a sediment forebay requires regularly scheduled operations and maintenance to operate such as a Vector Truck to

extract all newly deposited sediment after each storm event. This forebay will increase the operational efficiency of the underground infiltration basin so it can store more water and minimize clogging due to sediment input.

- New Storm Drain Main installed on Crown Valley Road from Smith Avenue to Soledad Canyon Road with four catch basins to address local flooding in the downtown area
- Eight Drywells situated along Crown Valley Road and Soledad Canyon Road to capture flows and infiltrate immediately in a self-contained system
- Swale with native vegetation along Escondido Canyon Road approximately from 1st Street to Crown Valley Road to

infiltrate surface flows into groundwater

Range of Benefits Expected and Communities Who Will Benefit

- Mitigates localized flooding during rain events
- Reduce urban heat island effect by adding native vegetation along sidewalks
- Provide aesthetic enhancements to the community
- Increases groundwater recharge to Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin
- Reduce sediments (containing bacteria, nutrients, and metals) and trash flooding city streets and residential areas and entering the Santa Clara River
 - Demonstrate multi-benefit green stormwater infrastructure in rural Los Angeles County contexts.

Rough Timeline

- Multiple years

Rough Cost Estimates

- Depending on the elements included, cost could be around \$500,000 for planning, \$1-1.5 million for design documents, and \$15 million for construction.

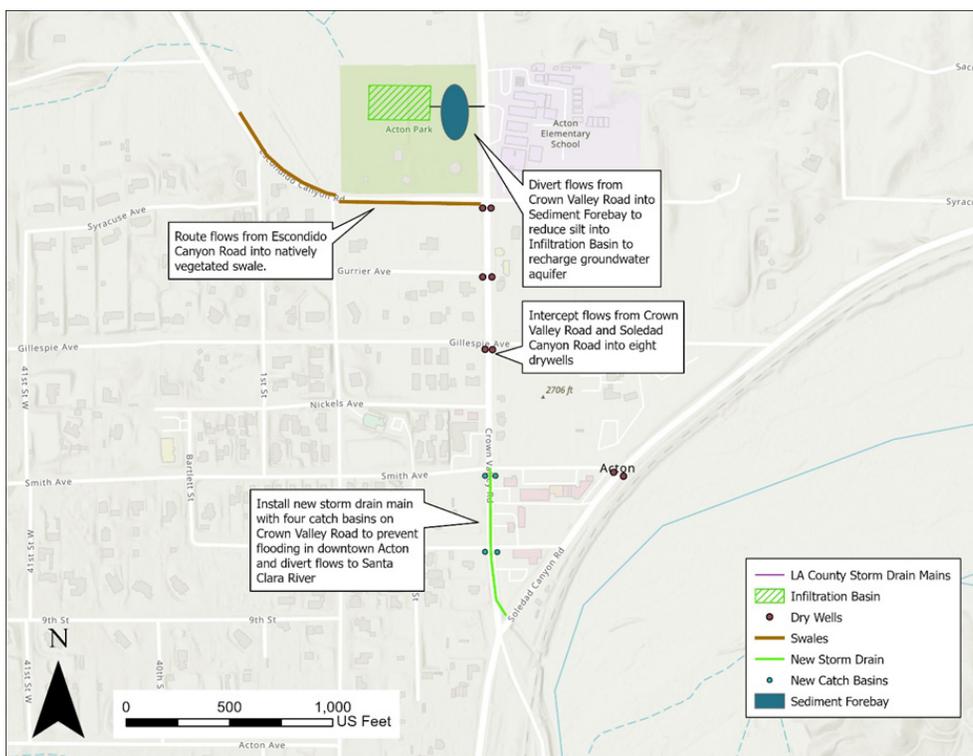


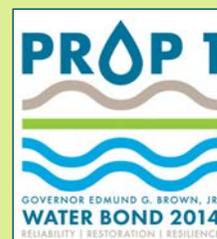
Figure 2. Proposed Stormwater Capture Improvements to Acton

January 2021

Sketch Developer

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Source: CA Dept. of Water Resources

Rural Water Supply Reliability Program

Project Location or Range

Upper Santa Clara River Region

Known or Potential Lead Applicant

TreePeople or entity to be determined

Supervisorial District(s) and IRWM Subregion(s)

Fifth District; Upper Santa Clara River

Known or Potential Partner(s)

- Acton Town Council
- Agua Dulce Town Council
- California Rural Water Association
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation
- LAC Waterworks
- TreePeople

Project Type

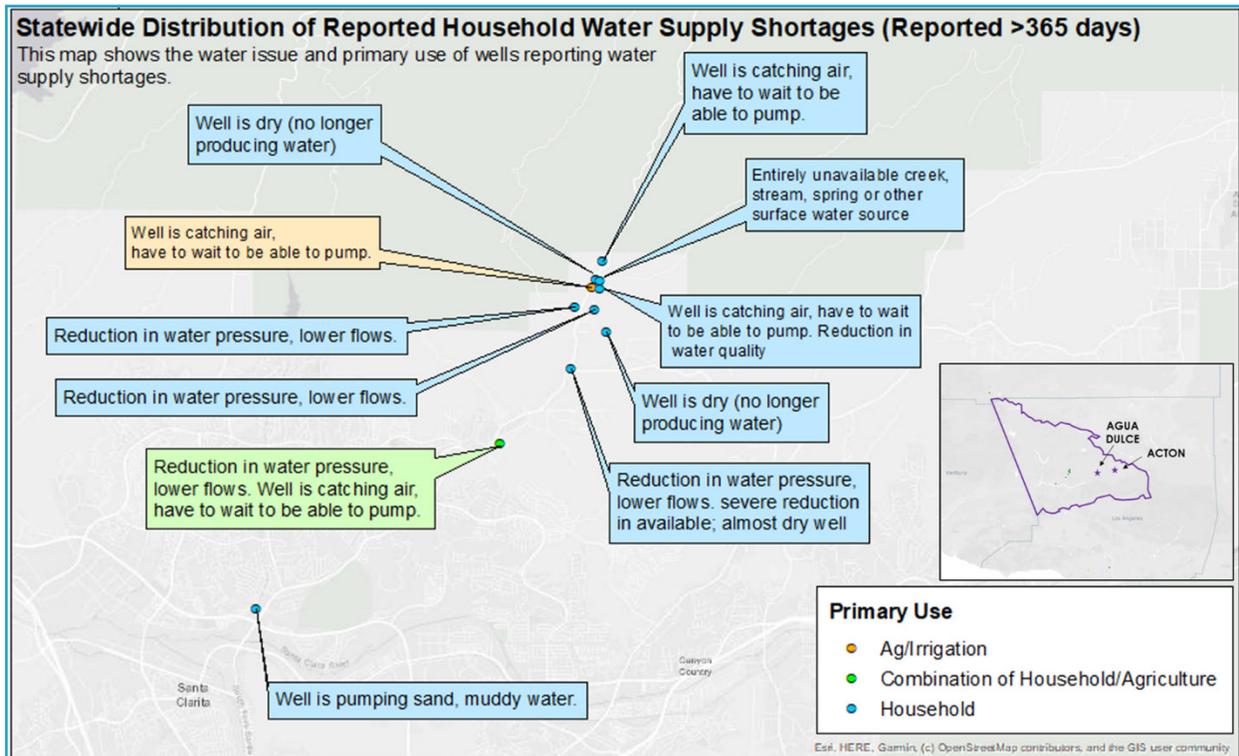
Programmatic/Non-construction implementation

Potential Project Components

- Hauled water relief
- Stormwater capture education/resources
- Well data inventory



Source: CA Dept. of Water Resources



Genesis of Project Idea

Community members expressed concerns about drinking water quality and supply reliability, as well as stormwater capture and having adequate water for firefighting.

Description

Domestic drinking water wells in the Upper Santa Clara River Region are vulnerable to lowering groundwater levels and groundwater quality degradation. In recent years and during the current drought, several domestic wells have gone dry or decreased in capacity due to lowering groundwater levels. Additionally, flooding and wildfires have led to concerns about having adequate water for firefighting and capturing stormwater. This effort focuses on identifying impacted households and connecting them with resources for short-term and long-term solutions.

Short Term - hauled water relief; stormwater capture education: a number of households in the region are already dealing with water shortages, and some have reported these through state reporting systems (like the California Department of Water Resources Household Water Supply Shortage Reporting System). These households are paying to haul water or are paying for bottled water to meet their immediate needs. Engaging with impacted households to identify ways to support their short-term or emergency needs, as well as identify

long-term solutions for water supply reliability, could allow for the preparation of applications to funding programs that support rural water reliability and drought relief. These funding sources support projects like temporary water tanks for households, hauling water, provision of bottled water, drilling of deeper wells, and connecting with a nearby water system. Some of these projects could have multiple long-term uses; for example, temporary water tanks could be used in the future to capture stormwater and reduce flooding while also reducing irrigation or livestock water needs. Stormwater capture education and resources may need to be provided to residents.

Long term - well/groundwater data inventory: while collecting data on groundwater levels and water quality across the region can help to generally understand groundwater trends, understanding where people may be most impacted by lowering groundwater levels or changes in groundwater quality is challenging without well construction information. In addition to working to identify support for immediate needs, this effort could also augment existing inventories of domestic well construction information and water quality data for the region, so that funding resources can be directed to households that may need to mitigate against changing groundwater level and quality. If strengthening a local domestic well inventory were included in this effort, workshops with the Acton and Agua Dulce Town Councils could be held so that residents can

decide what information should be included, and whether well locations should be obscured so that well information cannot be tied to a specific household or parcel.

Range of Benefits Expected and Communities Who Will Benefit

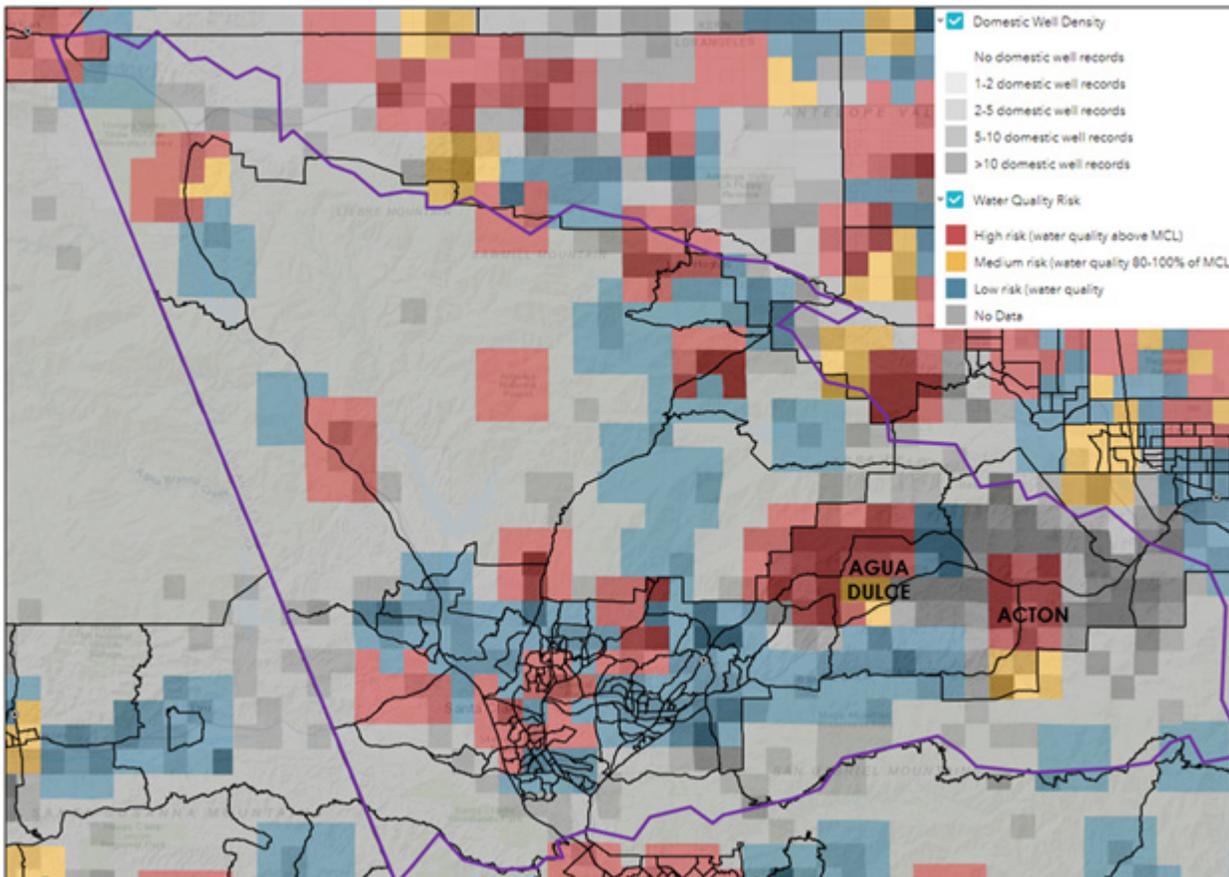
- Drinking water supply reliability
- Stormwater capture
- Firefighting flow for rural communities

Rough Timeline

- Apply to state grants for short-term/emergency solutions in mid 2022
- Stormwater capture outreach and education in mid/late 2022
- Strengthen domestic well inventory in late 2022

Rough Cost Estimates

- Hauling water can cost between a few hundred to over a thousand dollars per household per month, depending on the cost of water from its source, availability of hauling trucks, and costs of administering a hauled water program. For households without a storage tank, an additional \$5,000-\$10,000 would be needed to buy and install a storage tank.
- A stormwater capture outreach and education could cost between \$25,000-\$100,000 depending on complexity and scope.
- Developing a domestic well inventory could cost between \$20,000-\$100,000, depending on what information is included, and how much outreach and engagement is carried out.

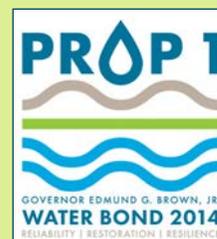


Source: Stantec; Data Source: State Water Resources Control Board

January 2021

Sketch Developer

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ARUNDO MAPPING AND PRIORITY REMOVAL PROJECT



Project Name:

Arundo Mapping and Priority Removal

Project Location or Range:

Santa Clara River Watershed (Upper and Lower)

Known Lead Applicant

Santa Clara River Conservancy (501-c-3)

BOS District and IRWM Sub-region

Fifth District Los Angeles County Supervisorial

IRWM subregions Upper Santa Clara River and Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County

Potential Partner(s):

The City of Santa Clarita

University of California Santa Barbara

Ventura County Watershed Protection District

Friends of the Santa Clara River, Sierra Club

The Nature Conservancy

United Water Conservation District

Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency

Project Type:

Planning; Ecosystem restoration

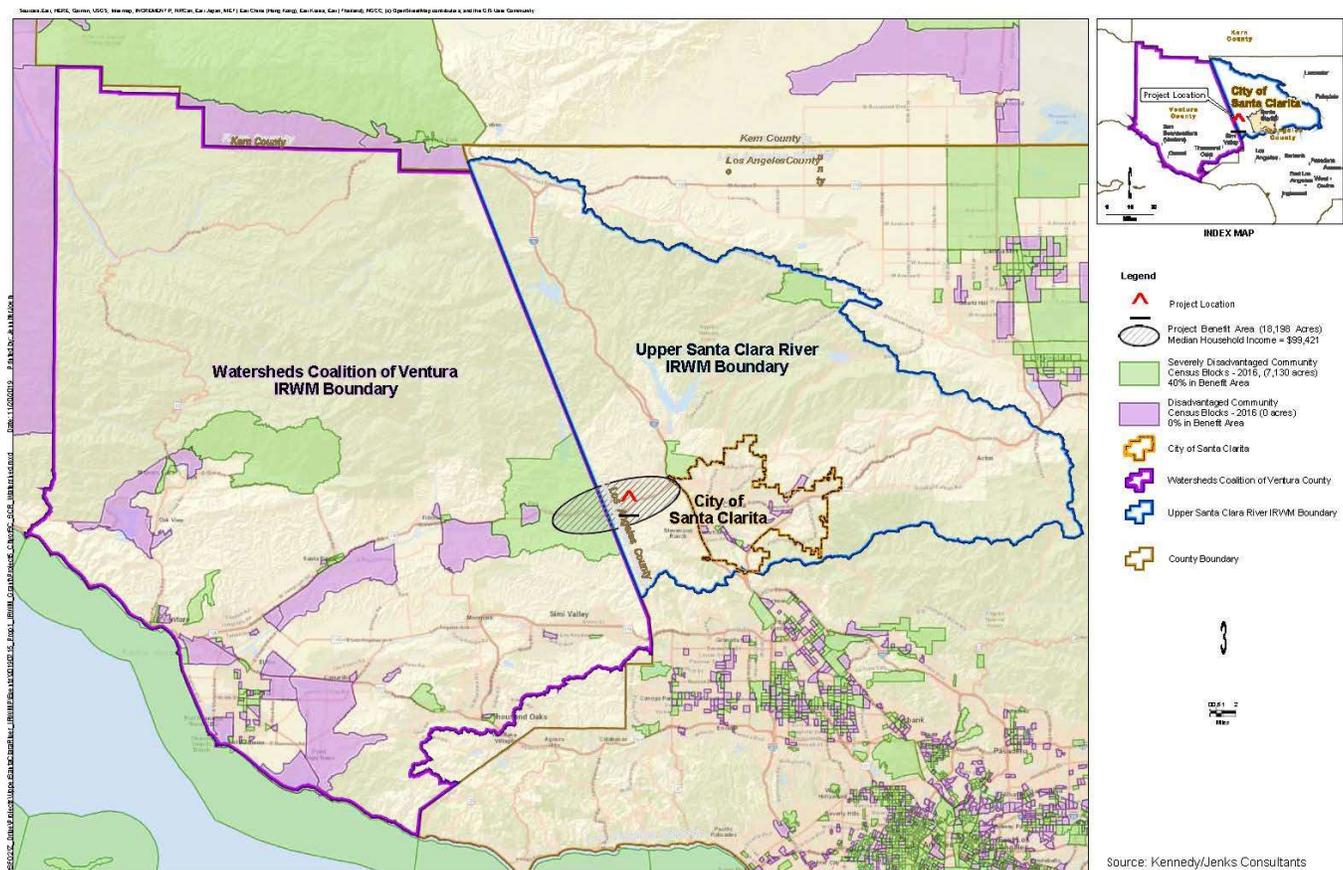
Project Components:

Mapping and prioritization tool

Plan Development

Restoration best practices pilot

Restoration implementation



Genesis of Project Idea: The sketch was created from an existing project that supports the WaterTalks Needs Assessment survey results, and top concerns. The top community concern in the USCR region is Water, including having adequate supply long-term and for use in fighting wildfire. The 2/3rd concerns are housing and homelessness. At the same time, residents feel that open space and access to natural resources is the top strength of this region. Supporting this project addresses the strengths and concerns of the community.

- Water supply: Arundo robs the Santa Clara River of more than 11,000 acre-feet of water annually.
- Fire: Arundo is flammable year-round; because of its location in riparian areas, it helps wildfires jump across waterways, spreading further and faster.
- Homelessness: Arundo creates attractive and dangerous places for unhoused community members to encamp
- Open space: Arundo is very hearty and aggressive and reduces native plant vegetation by stealing water from other plants and creating dense groves that allow for no competition from plants that should be supporting a healthy native landscape.

Description: This project, already underway with partial funding from Prop 1 IRWM Round 1, will create an accurate and up-to-date geo-spatial database that would be valuable for developing management strategies and financing to control Arundo, as well as other weeds that are not well recorded in the watershed. The mapping effort will develop a strategic and systematic process to prioritize removal and management programs to reduce these threats. Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data was acquired (October 2015) for the full Santa Clara River floodplain and provides a cost-effective platform for assessing non-native and native vegetation distributions. The raw data need to be processed, with ground-truthing field surveys, to map current vegetation status and prioritize locations for weed management. This project will also provide a

key step in developing a natural resource monitoring system to detect trends, both positive and negative, related to watershed management and climate modification.

Once prioritized and mapped, this project will implement Arundo removal in areas most beneficial to human and natural at-risk communities. Removal includes mowing and initial treatment of all Arundo within the project area, followed by quarterly weed treatments as necessary. Monitoring of the work will lead to recommendations for adaptive management of the restoration approach based on on-the-ground conditions.

Range of benefits expected and communities who will benefit

This project will have substantial benefits for the watershed communities. Arundo removal will have multiple benefits for local and regional water resources by:

- Reducing dependence on imported water and protecting, conserving and augmenting groundwater supplies;
- Protecting and improving water quality;
- Protecting people, property and the environment from adverse flooding and fire impacts associated with Arundo;
- Protecting and restoring habitat and ecosystems in watersheds;
- Enhancing water-related recreational, public access and educational opportunities.

Timeline / Next Step

Year 1: Site Prioritization map: Arundo removal plan for designated treatment sites

Year 2 - 5: Treatment of sites, monitoring and adaptive management

Cost Estimate

\$508,000. This funding supports a Prop 1 IRWM Round 1 grant, work for which began late in 2021.



Resource: Santa Clara River Conservancy
Arundo grove after removal

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SKETCH DEVELOPERS:

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