



# Ventura River Watershed Adjudication

*The Proposed Solution*







# Background

In order to safeguard the Ventura River Watershed — a precious local resource — the City of Ventura and a coalition of local large water users have released for public review a locally controlled, collaborative and enforceable agreement **(called a “physical solution”)** to protect the Watershed and those who rely on it.





# What is a physical solution?

A physical solution is a common-sense approach to solving complex water issues. It is an equitable concept rooted in the California Constitution that supports the development of a cooperative solution to protect and maintain reasonable and beneficial water uses in the Watershed.



# What is the goal of the physical solution being proposed?

The physical solution has two primary goals:

To improve habitat and access for the endangered **Steelhead population** in the Watershed.

To protect reasonable and beneficial water uses while maintaining **historical flows** critical to the Steelhead. The physical solution does not impair nor determine water rights, priority or water allocations. It protects existing water usage while also protecting the Steelhead population.



# What are the components of the physical solution being proposed?

The City and its negotiating parties worked with a committee comprised of experts on the Steelhead population and hydrology to identify the following components of the solution:



**Removing barriers** in the Watershed that block the Steelhead's access to critical habitat



**Improving habitat** in the Watershed so that the Steelhead have places to spawn, rear and grow before they leave for the ocean



**Creating programs** that reduce non-native species such as Arundo and non-native fish populations that are preying upon the Steelhead population or harming the habitat



**Developing ongoing monitoring efforts** to monitor the health of the Steelhead population, to better understand hydrology in the Watershed and to monitor the quality of water as it relates to the Steelhead population

# How will this physical solution be implemented?

The physical solution proposed is a three-phased approach that benefits from a structural support system rooted in governance and enforcement.



## **GOVERNANCE:**

The creation of a management committee set up through the court process, who will be charged with developing a 10-year management plan that addresses the implementation of the aforementioned components.



## **ENFORCEMENT:**

Through this court-approved process, metrics for compliance will be set in a meaningfully enforceable way, which will hold all parties accountable for specific actions that they can control.



# How will the physical solution be funded?

The City and the consumptive users group have funded the adjudication to this point and will continue to support implementation of the physical solution. Following adoption of the physical solution, and an 18-month development phase, water users within the Watershed will be required to assist the parties in funding the implementation of the plan.







# Is there a “de minimis” user category in the physical solution?

Yes, the physical solution establishes a de minimis user category of 5.0 acre feet per year (AFY). If a person can demonstrate to the management committee that they extract less than 5.0 AFY from the Watershed, that person can continue that de minimis use and will not be directly affected by the physical solution as long as their use remains de minimis.