

Memorandum of Understanding  
Between the  
Santa Clara River Valley  
Upper Basin Water Purveyors and  
United Water Conservation District

August 2001

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered into effective August 20, 2001, by and among Castaic Lake Water Agency ("CLWA"), CLWA's Santa Clarita Water Division ("SCWC"), Newhall County Water District ("NCWD"), Valencia Water Company ("VWC") and Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 36 ("LACWD"), which are collectively referred to as the "Upper Basin Water Purveyors" and United Water Conservation District "UWCD", hereinafter referred together as the "parties."

### RECITALS

**WHEREAS**, UWCD is a public agency that encompasses approximately 214,000 acres of land located in central Ventura County. UWCD's service area covers the downstream portion of the Santa Clara River Valley in Ventura County, as well as the Oxnard Plain (sometimes referred to as the "Lower Santa Clara River Area"). UWCD manages surface and groundwater resources within seven groundwater basins in the Lower Santa Clara River Valley Area. UWCD's Boundary is shown on Figure 1-1; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Upper Basin Water Purveyors meet regularly as a technical group to coordinate conjunctive use of imported, recycled and groundwater resources of the water basins east of the Los Angeles/ Ventura County line (sometimes referred to as the "Upper Santa Clara River Area"), which is located almost entirely within northwestern Los Angeles County. The respective services areas of the Upper Basin Water Purveyors members (CLWA, SCWC, NCWD, VWC and LACWD) are shown on Figure 1-2; and,

**WHEREAS**, UWCD has been involved in the review of water resources in both the Lower Santa Clara River Area and also the Upper Santa Clara River Area as part of UWCD's review of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and EIR (NRSP); and,

**WHEREAS**, litigation of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan and EIR resulted in preparation of an additional analysis to the previously certified EIR for the NRSP, including the section addressing water resource issues; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Additional Analysis includes a water flow model and impact analyses of the future water usage projections for the Upper Santa Clara River Area; and,

**WHEREAS**, UWCD, Newhall Land and Farming Company (NLF) and others have had several technical meetings to further study the Additional Analysis as it relates to the water issues, and, based on this information, and further discussions between UWCD and the Upper Basin Water Purveyors, UWCD believes that it is in the best interests of the parties and the future beneficial water resources management in the upper and lower basins to enter into a cooperative working relationship among the parties; and,

**WHEREAS**, the parties have determined that this MOU is the best format for establishing a program that would be implemented over time for purposes of agreeing upon overall water resources management techniques and an information database that would benefit the upper and lower basins; and,

**WHEREAS**, this MOU is prepared by UWCD and the Upper Basin Water Purveyors because the parties believe that a cooperative water resource monitoring program in the Upper and Lower Santa Clara River Areas is desirable to protect and enhance the conjunctive use of imported water, groundwater and surface water resources within the region; and,

**WHEREAS**, the parties support regional water planning efforts that rely on the provision of accurate and timely information about available water resources; and,

**WHEREAS**, the parties to this MOU desire to create and maintain a cooperative relationship for purposes of gathering information for UWCD and the Upper Basin Water Purveyors to be used in further assessing imported water, surface water and groundwater conditions in both the Upper and Lower Santa Clara River Areas; and,

**WHEREAS**, the parties to this MOU intend to form a reciprocal relationship. In order to do this, UWCD will designate an individual or individuals with technical knowledge and experience appointed by the General Manager of UWCD who will be included in discussions and efforts that take place with the Upper Basin Water Purveyors and others regarding the Upper Santa Clara River Area. Likewise, the Upper Basin Water Purveyors will designate an individual or individuals with technical knowledge and experience appointed by the General Managers of the Upper Basin Purveyors who will be included in discussions and efforts with UWCD and others regarding the Lower Santa Clara River Area, and,

**WHEREAS**, the goal of the MOU is to establish a joint monitoring program, which includes: (a) data collection (monitoring and testing); (b) database management; (c) groundwater flow modeling; (d) assessment of groundwater basin conditions (operational yield); and (e) report preparation and presentation.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants herein contained, the parties to this MOU agree as follows:

- 1.1 **Program Monitoring.** The parties will participate in a joint monitoring program.
- 1.2 **Program Content.** The technical aspects of this joint monitoring program are set forth in a technical memorandum entitled, "Water Resource Monitoring Program Upper Santa Clara River Area," (Program) which is attached as Exhibit 1 and incorporated by this reference.
- 1.3 **Program Meetings.** The General Manager or President of each party to this MOU (or their designee) shall meet as the "Program Committee" within 30 days of the execution of this MOU. The "Program Committee" will establish appropriate subcommittees to initiate the Program and determine the meeting times and locations for the committees. The Program Committee and subcommittees will discuss and coordinate technical aspects of the Program, including the gathering, interpretation and reporting of information as outlined in the technical memorandum (Exhibit 1). Other attendees may be permitted by agreement of the parties to this MOU.

- 1.4 **Monitoring Costs.** The costs incurred in administrating the Monitoring Program will be determined as implementation of the Program takes place. However, it is understood that, unless the parties to this MOU agree otherwise, the Upper River monitoring costs of the program will be borne by the Upper Basin Water Purveyors because such monitoring will take place within their service areas and the Lower River monitoring costs of the program will be borne by UWCD because such monitoring will take place within its service area.
- 1.5 **Program Implementation.** The parties to this MOU have prepared a schedule, attached as Exhibit 2, that describes the tasks and estimated time to implement the Program. The Parties acknowledge that Program Implementation will be an on-going and evolving process and may change due to future amendments to the Program, challenging technical issues or other unforeseen circumstances.
- 1.6 **Water Rights.** Notwithstanding the provisions of this MOU, nothing in either this MOU or the technical memorandum (Exhibit 1) shall be construed as affecting the water rights or operations of any party, person or entity.
- 1.7 **Term.** This MOU shall remain in effect for an initial period of seven (7) years and shall be automatically renewed for additional one year increments unless otherwise unanimously terminated by the members of the Program Committee as that committee exists at the time action is taken to terminate this MOU.
- 1.8 **Counterparts.** This MOU may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which, when so executed, will be deemed to be an original and all of which taken together will constitute one and the same agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this MOU as of the date first set forth above.

United Water Conservation District

By Dana L. Weichert  
General Manager

Castaia Lake Water Agency

By Robert C. Seymour  
General Manager

Newhall County Water District

By Karen J. Russell  
General Manager

Valencia Water Company

By Robert J. Drumio  
President

Santa Clarita Water Company

By W. J. Manetta  
President

Los Angeles County Waterworks District

No. 36

By Dean Eptatha  
County of Los Angeles

# ● United Water Conservation District Boundary

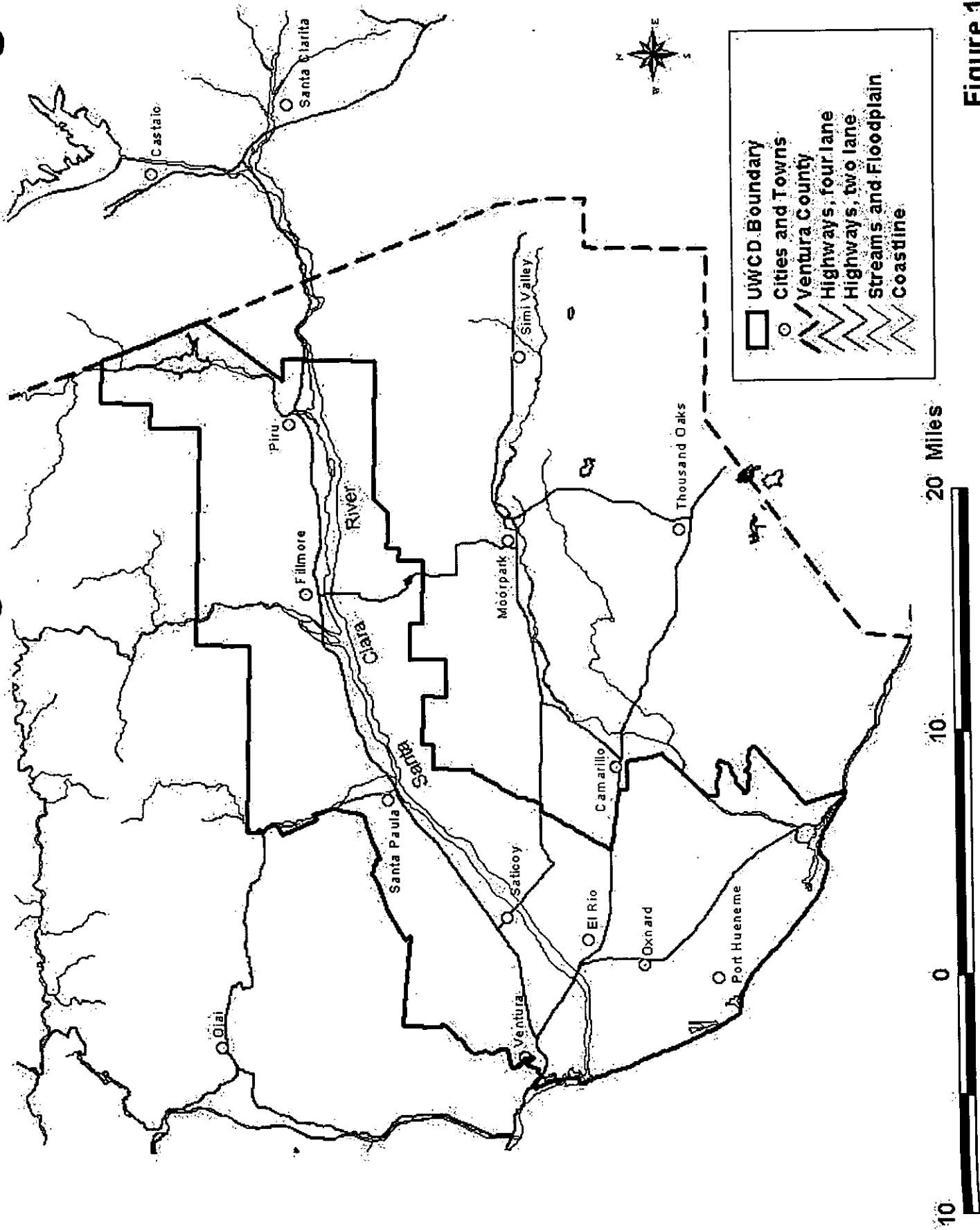
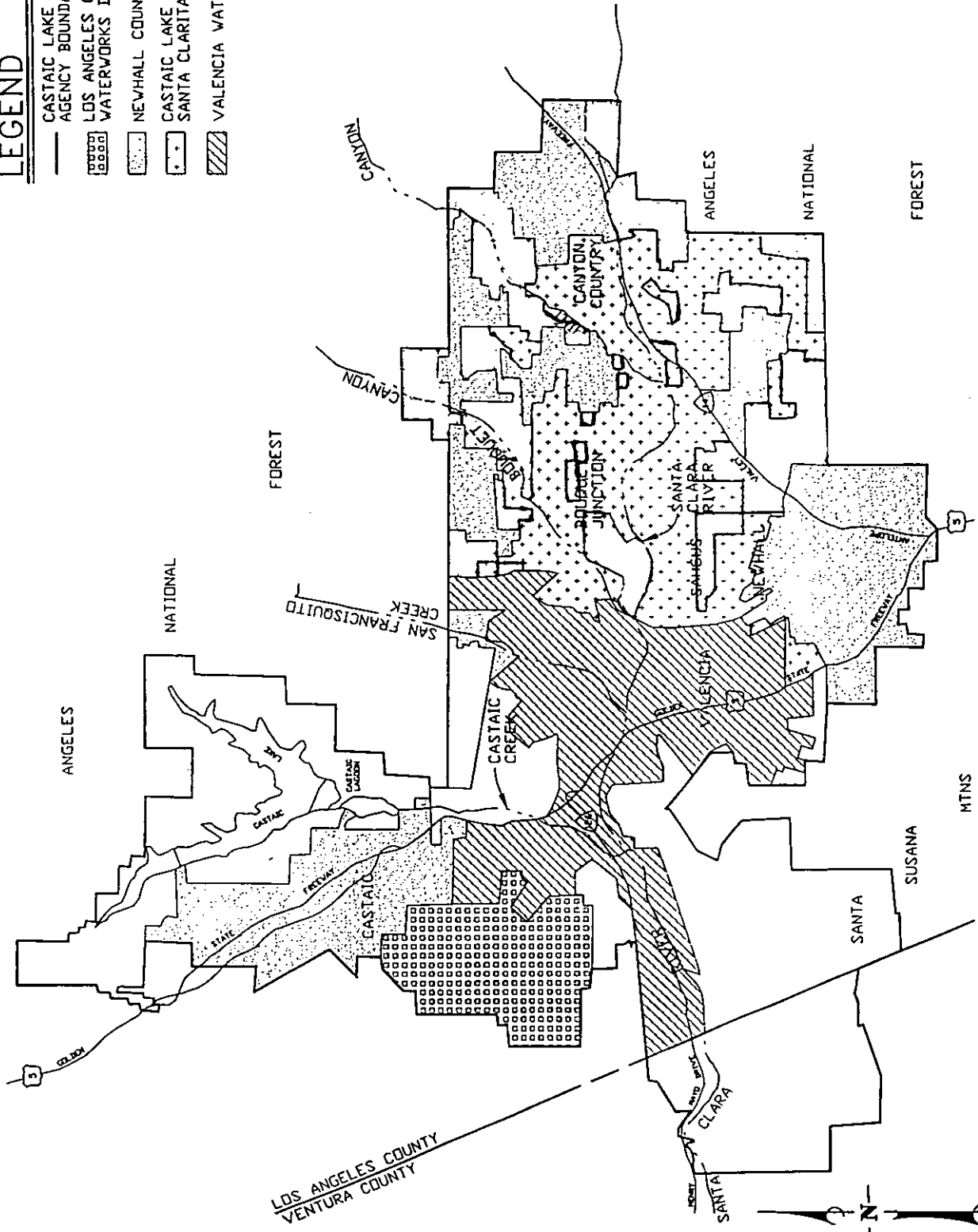


Figure 1-1

**LEGEND**

- CASTAIC LAKE WATER AGENCY BOUNDARY
- LOS ANGELES COUNTY WATERWORKS DISTRICT NO. 36
- NEVHALL COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
- CASTAIC LAKE WATER AGENCY'S SANTA CLARITA WATER DIVISION
- VALENCIA WATER COMPANY



SCALE: 1"=16,000'

CLWA AND WATER PURVEYOR SERVICE AREAS



Exhibit 1

**Exhibit 1**  
**WATER RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM**  
**UPPER SANTA CLARA RIVER AREA**

**INTRODUCTION**

As part of its ongoing monitoring, interpretation, and reporting on imported water supplies and groundwater conditions in the aquifer systems underlying the Upper Santa Clara River Area, generally east of the Los Angeles County - Ventura County line and extending east to about the vicinity of Lang Station, the principal water purveyors in the area (primarily the municipal water purveyors - Castaic Lake Water Agency, Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 36, Newhall County Water District, and Valencia Water Company) have committed to formalizing the data base on which water supply conditions are analyzed, and expanding the analysis of groundwater conditions such that the adequacy of water supply is well understood, and that both local and regional questions or issues about surface and groundwater can be addressed.

This water monitoring program outline has been prepared as a cooperative effort by the Upper Basin Water Purveyors operating in the Santa Clarita Valley and by the United Water Conservation District in Ventura County, the latter as the primary groundwater resource management entity in the Lower Santa Clara River Area (west of the Los Angeles - Ventura County line). The intent of the program outline is to delineate a series of elements that will be undertaken primarily by the Upper River Area entities, but in cooperation with United such that there is ultimately an integrated and coordinated data base, as well as agreed-upon technical tools such as a numerical groundwater flow model, to allow a continued regional understanding of water resources along the Santa Clara River. In that light, the following program includes elements which address data collection (monitoring and testing), database management, groundwater modeling, operational yield analyses, and report preparation and presentation.

## **DATA COLLECTION (MONITORING AND TESTING)**

Historically, data on groundwater and related hydrologic conditions have been collected on varying frequencies and in varying formats throughout the Upper River Area. Fortunately, more than sufficient data have historically been collected on groundwater levels, quality, and production (pumpage) to permit general assessment of groundwater conditions, in some detail in the widely developed Alluvial aquifer and to a lesser extent the Saugus Formation aquifer. In order to expand on the general assessment of groundwater conditions, historical data collection efforts will be updated and formalized in the following areas.

*Groundwater Levels and Quality* - Wells in which historical and current water level data are available will be “qualified” (to confirm locations, depths, well completion details, annular seals, etc.) to confirm their utility for ongoing monitoring of water level and/or water quality in a particular aquifer. Based on a combination of qualified well details and available historical and current data, a network of existing and future wells will be developed for ongoing monitoring of groundwater levels (initially on a semi-annual frequency) and groundwater quality (initially on an annual to triennial frequency, depending on the use of the well) in both the Alluvium and the Saugus Formation aquifers. The water level and water quality monitoring networks may not be identical (as with most basins, the number of water level monitoring points will likely be greater than the number of water quality monitoring points). Also, in light of the relative differences in development of the two aquifer systems, there will be more monitoring points in the Alluvium than in the Saugus. However, as future development of the Saugus increases, particularly as the spatial extent of the Saugus “well field” expands, the Saugus monitoring network will evolve and expand accordingly. Water quality details are expected to begin with what historical analyses have been made; monitored details are expected to increase as the use of local Groundwater continues to change from irrigation supply to municipal supply, with the addition of organic and other hazardous chemical analyses of drinking water supplies in recent years. Finally, such as any dedicated monitoring wells are installed in the

area, for specific site investigation or other purposes, they will be added to the qualified well network as appropriate.

*Groundwater Pumpage* - Essentially all pumpage in the Upper Area (except small capacity individual domestic and similar wells) is metered or directly estimated from electrical power records, and the results are maintained in a decentralized data base. Metered measurement of all substantial capacity wells (all municipal and agricultural, as well as other private wells, e.g. golf course irrigation wells) will be continued on at least an annual basis, with progression to monthly data collection as appropriate for particular analyses that may be undertaken.

*Surface Water Flows and Quality* - Historical stream gage sites will be preserved as possible to allow ongoing surface water gaging of stream inflows to the Upper River area, stream outflows from the Upper River area into Ventura County, and return flows to the River system from in-area wastewater treatment plant discharges. Surface water quality at the same points will also be sampled on some frequency to continue historical records as appropriate or to document episodic or other (e.g. treated wastewater discharges) surface water flows into or out of the Upper River area.

*Well and Aquifer Characteristics* - Recently constructed wells, in both the Alluvium and Saugus Formation, have been tested, in some cases with the benefit of nearby monitoring wells, to determine well yields and aquifer hydraulic properties (e.g. transmissivity and storage coefficient). In limited cases, production logging and depth-specific water quality sampling has been undertaken to examine variations in aquifer productivity and quality with depth. Such as there is a need for additional spatial or vertical distribution of well yield or aquifer characteristic data, selected qualified wells will be tested in the Alluvium and Saugus aquifers. In general, all new production wells will be tested to determine the yields of the wells and the hydraulic characteristics of the aquifer materials in which they are completed at various locations in the Upper River area.

*Precipitation* - The locations of historical precipitation gaging will be verified and the quality of the

gaging stations will be assessed. Continuation of historical gaging will be a primary goal, with additions as appropriate to assess inflow of water within the Upper River area as well as distribution of precipitation throughout the area.

## **DATABASE MANAGEMENT**

*Geographic Information System* - There is a good start on a regional GIS from the US Geological Survey's Regional Aquifer Study. For instance, roads, streams and other basic geographic features are in the USGS GIS that has been maintained and expanded by United Water Conservation District. United has commercial digital air photo coverage of Ventura County that includes a small portion of western Los Angeles County; additional digital imagery will be sought from agencies in Los Angeles County.

Most of the wells in the Valencia/Santa Clarita area are also in a USGS GIS coverage that includes well construction information. The wells are identified by owners designations as well as state well number. By using the state well number in identifying all monitoring data, information from the databases can be linked directly to the GIS well coverage.

*Water Level Database* - Monitoring data will be collected together in common databases, using an easily accessible program such as Microsoft Access. Groundwater level information is presently in a variety of forms, including paper copy, spreadsheet files, and agency databases. The digital information will be incorporated into a master database, but the data on paper copies will have to be entered into a computer. This will be accomplished by prioritizing the order in which this information is entered. Historic groundwater level data will be obtained from as many wells as possible, public and private, to ensure meaningful area coverage.

*Water Quality Database* - Water quality information may be a larger chore to organize in a database than water levels because each water sample collected is commonly analyzed for a large number of constituents. For water quality data collected in the future, analytical labs can provide results in digital form for ease of integration into a database. Historical water quality information is available digitally from the California Department of Health Services for public water supply wells (data is available for about the past ten years). For the rest of the historical water quality data, prioritizing the order of manual data entry would be necessary. Constituents of concern are obviously the first to be entered. Whether to enter all historical data will need to be addressed; this information is valuable in identifying long-term trends, but data entry takes time. United Water now has all historic water quality data for seven basins in Ventura County in a database, but it took several years to do this.

Water quality data from surface sources such as streams will also be included in the main water quality database. A location identifier can be used to tie the sample to the monitoring location in a GIS coverage. The approximate flow of the surface water source at the time of measurement should accompany each water quality data entry.

*Pumpage Database* - Pumpage data from individual wells is key to assessing both water level and water quality trends. This information is also required to construct a groundwater model. Some of this information has already been entered in computer files and can be readily imported into a database. Other information will likely have to be obtained on a cooperative basis. If pumpers do not have their own metered pumping records, pumpage will be estimated from other sources such as utility bills. For wells where no records have been kept, probable pumping quantities can be estimated through land use records and, in the case of irrigated agriculture, from irrigation methods and practices. This calculated information should not be entered directly in the pumpage database.

*Streamflow Database* - There should be a database of streamflow measured at various monitoring points. For USGS gauges, much of this information is already in digital form. Other agencies, such as County Flood Control, may also have digital data.

## **GROUNDWATER FLOW MODELING**

As part of the technical analysis of water supply alternatives to meet projected water demands of the proposed Newhall Ranch project in the Upper River area, a numerical groundwater flow model was prepared for that project's proponent. That model was developed to focus on the feasibility and impacts of a potential storage and recovery project in the Saugus Formation, including the impacts of injection and recovery pumping in the Saugus on the overlying Alluvium, and the resultant impacts on Santa Clara River flows out of the Upper River area. The current model is calibrated for a steady state condition, including the addition of some focused injection and pumping. As a result, it represents a useful initial modeling effort of the overall aquifer system in the Upper River area. Depending on its availability for other uses in the Upper River area, that initial model will be subjected to transient calibration efforts and additional calibration of the Alluvial aquifer. The model will then become an evolving tool for analysis of ongoing groundwater development and recharge, in conjunction with imported surface water, and the resultant impacts on groundwater conditions in the Upper River area, as well as on surface outflows to the downstream basins on the Santa Clara River.

## **OPERATIONAL YIELD OF THE BASIN**

A primary objective of the monitoring efforts, database management efforts, and modeling efforts described above is to assess groundwater basin conditions in the Upper River area in the context of the long term sustainability of the Alluvium aquifer and the generally underlying Saugus Formation, and to operate the basin such that the operating yield is not exceeded over a multi-year wet/dry cycle.

This operational yield includes flexibility of groundwater use by allowing increased groundwater use during dry periods and increased recharge (direct or in-lieu) with supplemental water when it is

available. The operational yield protects the aquifer by assuring that groundwater supplies are adequately replenished from one wet/dry cycle to the next. Historical groundwater data demonstrates that the Alluvium has been, and continues to be developed within its long-term sustainability (i.e. no

chronic lowering of water levels, no notable trend toward degradation of groundwater quality, etc.). Limited historical data in the Saugus Formation shows no lowering of water levels or degradation of water quality where it has been developed.

While current planning places future pumping of the Alluvium in the same range as has historically occurred for several decades, with anticipated similar results in terms of Alluvial water levels, storage, and quality, the model described above will be a useful tool to quantify the impacts in water budget terms and to analyze a range of scenarios as appropriate to optimize the use of the high-yielding Alluvium. The Saugus Formation is alternately being considered for short-term dry-period water supply at capacities higher than have historically been pumped from that formation, and for injection, storage and recovery of water as part of the overall water supply of the Upper Santa Clara River area. The model will also be used to determine the operational yield of the Saugus under a wide-ranging set of low to high pumping capacities (during wet to dry years, respectively), and with varying aquifer storage (recharge), to avoid undesirable impacts and assure that the operating yield is not exceeded over a multi-year wet/dry cycle.

## **REPORTING**

Beginning in 1998, an annual report on water supply conditions in the Upper Santa Clara River area has been prepared by the water purveyors in the Upper River area. Those reports have focused on a planning-level discussion of current and immediate future water demands, and the availability of local Groundwater and imported surface water to meet those demands. The overall primary objectives of the reports have been to provide some documentation, to local and County planners as



well as County Supervisors, on the water supply conditions in the Santa Clarita Valley and to present a general assessment of the status of groundwater conditions in both the Alluvial and Saugus aquifer systems, with a focus of that assessment on historical and recent groundwater development within operating yield parameters.

As the water resource monitoring program described above is implemented and evolves, it is planned that reporting on groundwater basin conditions will evolve in two generally parallel ways: 1) a continuation of the annual reporting on current water supply conditions, as a basis for current planning and consideration of development proposals; and 2) the addition of less frequent, more technically oriented reports on the geologic and hydrologic aspects of the groundwater resources of the Upper River area, including documentation of: a) groundwater basin conditions, b) development and application of modeling efforts to assess operational yield and the impacts of long-term planned utilization of local groundwater as part of the overall water supply, and c) assessment of actual versus predicted impacts on groundwater and surface water, including basin outflows, combined with ongoing updated assessments of the adequacy of local groundwater management actions and identification of any needed changes which are identified over time. As needed, the resource monitoring program and technical reports will be coordinated with interested regulatory agencies such as the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Health Services and the California Department of Toxics and Substance Control.

Exhibit - 2

## Exhibit 2 WATER RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM UPPER SANTA CLARA RIVER AREA

