VENTURA RIVER WATERSHED PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Public Scoping Meeting

September 10, 2026

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WHY WE ARE HERE

PURPOSE OF TODAY'S MEETING

- **Introduce** the Ventura River Watershed Project
- **Share** information gathered to date
- **Explain** the planning and environmental review process
- **Collect** public input to help identify issues, concerns, and opportunities

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Public comments help shape the alternatives evaluated in the Watershed Plan Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA)
- Comments submitted through official channels become part of the project record
- Additional opportunities for public review and comment will be available throughout the process

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PROJECT TEAM



- NRCS (Lead Federal Agency)
- Local sponsor (VCWPD)
- Technical and environmental consultants
- Olsson
- ESA
- Pinyon Environmental
- Engineering Partner Firms

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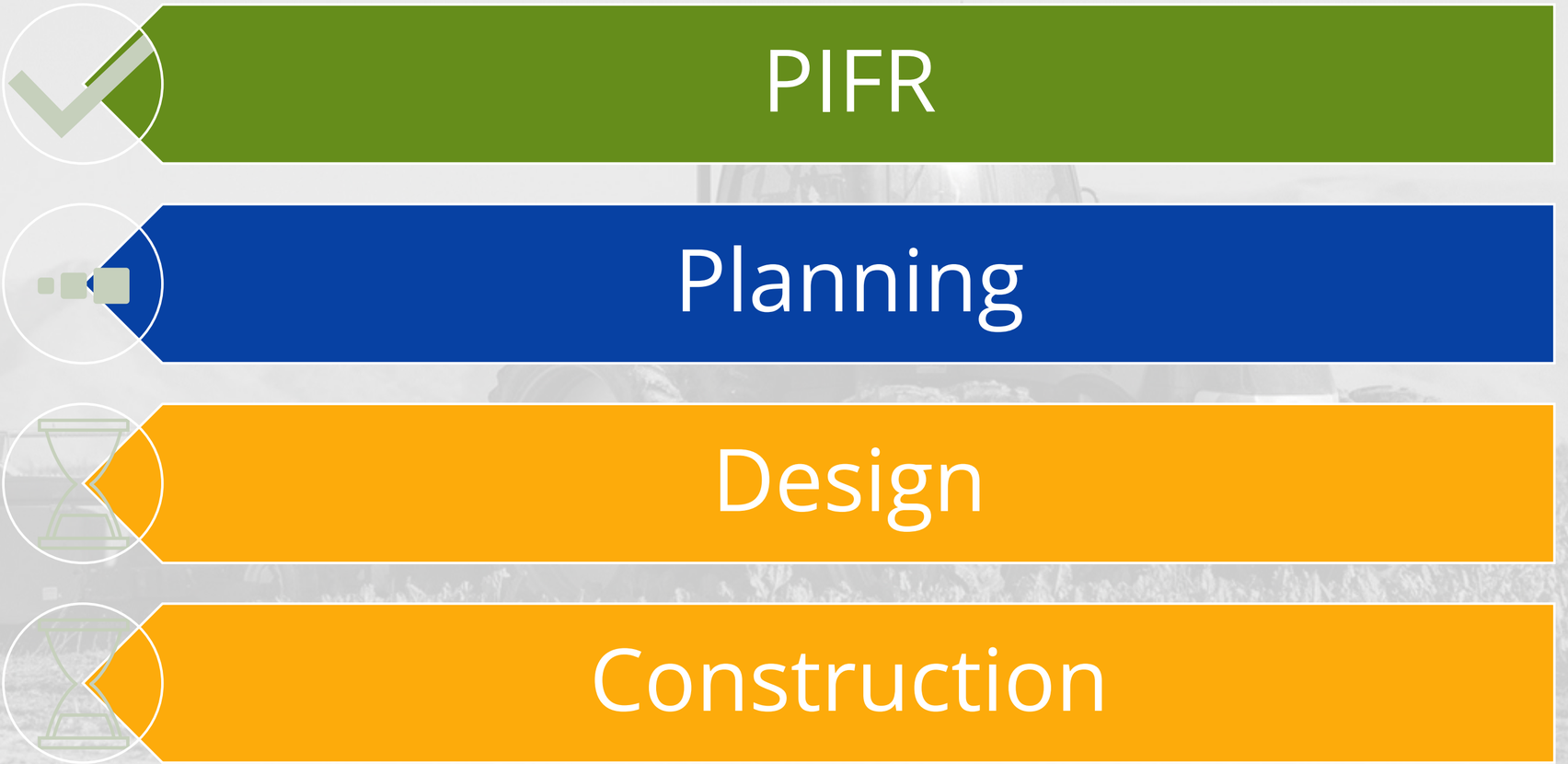
NRCS

- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- We are the Lead Federal Agency (LFA) for this project
  - Responsible for ensuring that the planning effort complies with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated environmental laws
  - Providing funding for this planning effort under PL-566

PL-566 and NEPA

- **What is PL-566?**
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program
- Supports projects that address watershed resource concerns such as flood prevention, watershed protection, and related environmental objectives

PL-566 Process



PL-566 and NEPA

1 Initiation & Scoping

NOTICE OF AWARD → Kick-off meeting with NRCS and Sponsor

DEVELOP public participation plan and mailing list

CONDUCT scoping meetings and prepare Scoping Report

2 Analysis & Draft Plan-EA

IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE all reasonable alternatives (including 'no action')

CONDUCT technical, environmental, and socioeconomic analyses

PREPARE Draft Plan-EA for State and Technical Review

3 Public & Agency Review

ISSUE NOTICE of Availability (NOA) and hold public meetings

COMPILE AND RESPOND to comments

REVISE AND PREPARE Final Plan-EA

Planning Process - Schedule

Task	Date
Scoping	In progress
Scoping Meeting	09/10/2026
Prepare Draft Watershed Plan-EA	Now until January 2027
NRCS - California Review	April 2027
NRCS - National Watershed Management Center Review	July 2027
NRCS – Programmatic Review	November 2027
Public Review (30-day comment period)	December 2027
Public Meeting	December 2027
Publish Final Watershed Plan-EA/FONSI	February 2028

NEPA and Public Involvement

What is NEPA and why is it required?

- Federal funding requires environmental review under NEPA
- NRCS is responsible for conducting the environmental review
- The process identifies, evaluates, and discloses potential environmental effects before a federal decision is made

What Does This Mean for the Public?

- Alternatives will be evaluated in a Watershed Plan - Environmental Assessment
- Public comments will help inform the analysis
- The environmental review process is transparent and includes multiple opportunities for public involvement



VENTURA RIVER WATERSHED BACKGROUND

MATILIJA DAM AND RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

- History and purpose of Matilija Dam
- Overview of Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project (MDERP)
- Relationship between MDERP and the Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment (WP-EA)

WATERSHED CHALLENGES

- Historic flooding and associated damages
- Existing flood risk to people, property, and infrastructure
- Fish passage constraints
- Sedimentation and watershed function
- Agricultural water management

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VENTURA RIVER WATERSHED BACKGROUND

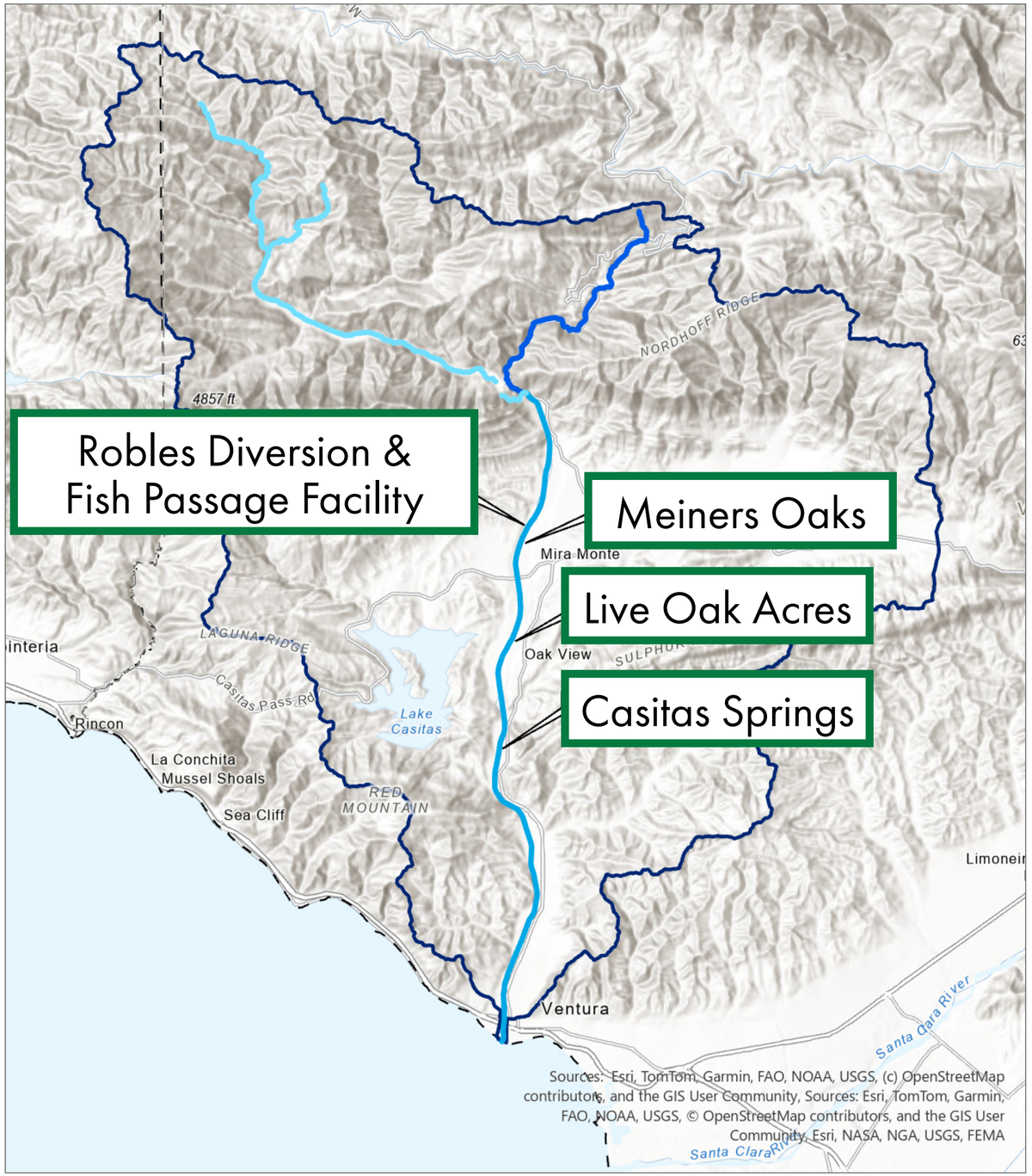
LOCATIONS IDENTIFIED THROUGH PREVIOUS STUDIES

- Robles Diversion
- Meiners Oaks
- Live Oak Acres
- Casitas Springs

WORK COMPLETED TO DATE

- Feasibility investigations
- Stakeholder and agency coordination
- Identification of PL-566 as a potential funding and implementation framework
- Varying levels of preliminary design for possible alternatives

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PURPOSE & NEED

The purpose of the Ventura River Watershed project (project) is to **reduce the potential for flood damage** from the Ventura River within the project area, and to **improve agricultural water management** to support long-term agricultural viability, consistent with the authorized purposes of PL 83-566.

The project is needed to reduce **risks to life, property, infrastructure, and agricultural resources** within the project area, including the communities of Meiners Oaks, Casitas Springs, and Live Oak Acres, and to **enhance the delivery of water** to support agricultural operations within the project area. **Aging and deficient flood control infrastructure** has been an extensive and costly management issue in the project area due to flood events and ongoing sedimentation in the Ventura River.

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ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION

TYPES OF ALTERNATIVES

NEPA requires us to consider a "reasonable range of alternatives."

- No Action Alternative
- Structural measures
- Non-structural measures
- Hybrid approaches

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ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative is required by NEPA and is representative of "Future without Project" if no federal action is taken.

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ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION

STRUCTURAL ALTERNATIVE

Structural works of improvement include engineering solutions for PL-566 project purposes of flood damage reduction and agricultural water management.

- Robles Diversion and Fish Passage Facility/ Meiners Oaks Flood Protection
- Live Oak Acres Levee Improvements
- Casitas Springs Levee Improvements

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STRUCTURAL ALTERNATIVE



ROBLES DIVERSION AND FISH PASSAGE FACILITY/MEINERS OAKS FLOOD PROTECTION

- Original facility constructed in 1958
- Diverts water from the Ventura River to Lake Casitas
- Sedimentation affects efficiency and requires costly operation and maintenance
- Fish passage retrofit completed in 2005

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STRUCTURAL ALTERNATIVE



LIVE OAK ACRES LEVEE

- Original levee built in 1978
- Current levee is non-FEMA accredited
- Levee needs to be improved in order to provide flood protection during large (up to 100-year) storm events

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STRUCTURAL ALTERNATIVE



CASITAS SPRINGS LEVEE

- Original levee built in 1979
- Current levee is non-FEMA accredited
- Levee needs to be improved in order to provide flood protection during (up to 100-year) storm events

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ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION

NON-STRUCTURAL ALTERNATIVE

- A non-structural alternative does not include engineered works of improvement but explores other solutions to reduce risks associated with flood damage.
- It is a requirement of the PI-566 program to analyze non-structural component(s).
  - Examples: flood-proofing structures, buy-out of property, conservation easements

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RESOURCE CATEGORIES OF CONCERN

Geology and Soils

- Geology
- Seismology
- Soils
- Prime and Unique Farmland

Water Resources

- Groundwater
- Stream Morphology
- Water Quality
- Water Quantity
- Floodplain Management
- Waters of the U.S., Wetlands
- Regional Water Resouce Plans

Air-Related Concerns

- Air Quality

Plant and Animal-Related Concerns

- Special Status Species
- Migratory Birds / Bald & Golden Eagles
- Invasive Species
- Fish and Wildlife
- Natural Areas
- Riparian Areas

Human Use-Related Concerns

- Cultural Resources and Historic Properties
- Local, Regional, and National Economy
- Public Health and Safety
- Scenic Beauty, Recreation
- Parklands
- Land Use
- Noise
- Hazardous Materials

Ecosystem Services

- Special Status Species
- Migratory Birds / Bald & Golden Eagles
- Invasive Species
- Fish and Wildlife
- Natural Areas
- Riparian Areas

The following resources were determined to not be relevant to the project: Sole Source Aquifers, Coastal Zone Management Areas, Coral Reefs, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Essential Fish Habitat, Ecologically Critical Areas, Forest Resources, Social Issues, Significant Scientific Resources

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HOW DECISIONS WILL BE MADE

ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION

- Ability to meet the project purpose and need
- Meet the goals of the project (screening criteria)
- Technical studies, environmental analysis, agency coordination, and public input

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

- The preferred alternative is the option that best satisfies project objectives while balancing potential benefits and impacts

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NEXT STEPS

2 Analysis & Draft Plan-EA

IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE reasonable alternatives (including 'no action')

CONDUCT technical, environmental, and socioeconomic analyses

PREPARE Draft Plan-EA for State and Technical Review

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PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

To submit a comment after the meeting:

- Visit the project website and complete the comment form: publicworks.venturacounty.gov/wpea
- Send an email to VenturaCounty_WatershedPlan@olsson.com
- Write to Stacey Roach, Olsson, 601 P Street, Suite 200, Lincoln, NE 68508

COMMENTS ON THE PROJECT WILL BE COLLECTED THROUGH OCTOBER 11, 2026.

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THANK YOU

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