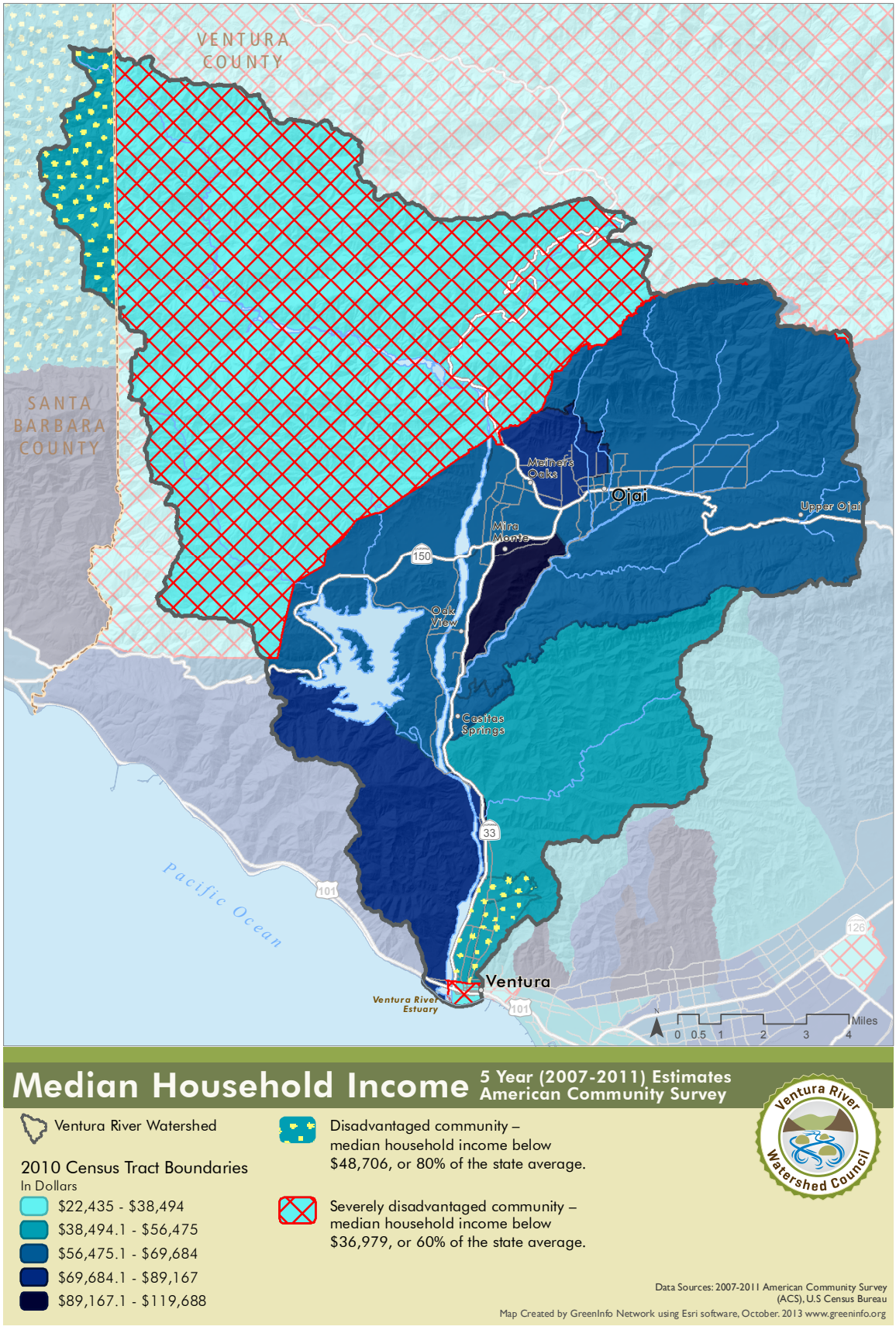


Figure 3.7.2.2.1 Median Household Income Map

Note: The northwest corner of the watershed is an unpopulated area that is part of a larger Census Track in Santa Barbara County.

Table 3.7.2.2.2 Jobs by Sector in the Watershed, 2012

	# of Jobs
Total Jobs:	**15,681**
Leisure and Hospitality (Art/Entertainment) jobs	3,860
Education and Health Services jobs	3,750
Professional and Business Services jobs	1,493
Retail Trade jobs	1,323
Construction jobs	1,179
Manufacturing jobs	895
Financial Activity jobs	784
Other Services jobs	537
Agriculture	438
Wholesale Trade jobs	360
Public/Administration jobs	301
Mining	275
Transportation, Warehousing and Utility jobs	269
Information jobs	217

Source: SCAG 2014

Note: In this analysis, jobs are considered to be in the watershed based on the physical location of the company. If a person works in the watershed, but is paid by a company based elsewhere, that job is not reflected in these data.

3.7.2.3 Housing

Housing in the watershed is provided predominantly by single-family homes. There were 27,710 occupied single-family dwellings in 2012; 2,967 occupied multi-family homes; 1,124 occupied mobile homes; and 49 occupied RVs/vans/boats. 60% of residents are homeowners and 40% are renters. 60% of the housing stock in the City of Ojai was built before 1970 (SCAG 2014). Over half of the housing stock, 58.3%, was built before 1970. A wide range of housing types and prices exists in the watershed, including areas of very large and expensive estates.

Table 3.7.2.3.1 Housing Data, 2008 and 2012

	2008	2012
Percentage of Renters v. Homeowners		
Owner	59.8%	60.2%
Renter	40.2%	39.8%
Single-family v. Multi-family housing permits		
Total	16,177	16,458
Single-family Detached Housing Units (occupied)	11,053	11,252
Single-family Attached Housing Units (occupied)	1,044	1,065
Multi-family/Apartment/Condo Housing Units (occupied)	2,910	2,967
Mobile Home Housing Units (occupied)	1,114	1,124
Boat, RV, Van, etc. (occupied)	55	49

Source: SCAG 2014

Homeless

At the time of the major river bottom cleanup in February 2012, an estimated 100 people were living in the lower Ventura River bottom. City of Ventura staff working on this issue estimated that as of January 2015, there were significantly fewer illegal campers in the Ventura River—perhaps as much as 80% fewer (Brown 2015).

Data from the *Ventura County 2014 Homeless Count and Subpopulation Survey* are summarized in Table 3.7.2.3.2. Only those persons who met the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department's (HUD) definition of homelessness were counted. HUD considers a person homeless only when he/she lives: 1) in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, and abandoned buildings; 2) in an emergency shelter; and 3) in transitional housing including safe havens (VCCEO 2014). Given that counters did not approach people who might be living in cars or tents, it is likely that there is a significant undercount of the homeless population. In addition, with the transient nature of homeless individuals, these counts are only a snapshot in time.

The overall number of homeless individuals counted in 2014 decreased 18% from the count in 2013. The number of homeless counted in 2014 was the lowest since the count's inception in 2007 (VCCEO 2014).

Table 3.7.2.3.2 Ventura County 2014 Homeless Count Data

	Adults						Children
City	Unsheltered Adults	Chronically Homeless	Male/ Female	Seniors (62+)	Mental Illness	Veterans	Unsheltered Children
Ventura[1]	265	47%	65%/31%	11%	30%	12%	19
Ojai	38	50%	87%/13%	13%	19%	16%	1

1. Applies to the entire City of Ventura, not just the part within the watershed.

Data Source: VCCEO 2014

3.7.2.4 Key Data and Information Sources/ Further Reading

Below is a summary of some of key documents that address demographics in the watershed. See "4.3 References" for complete reference citations.

Profile of the City of Ojai (SCAG 2013)

Profile of the City of San Buenaventura (SCAG 2013)

Profile of the Unincorporated Area of Ventura County (SCAG 2013)

Ventura County 2014 Homeless Count and Subpopulation Survey: Final Report. April 2014 (VCCEO 2014)

Acronyms

HUD—U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department

SCAG—Southern California Association of Governments

3.7.3 Land Use

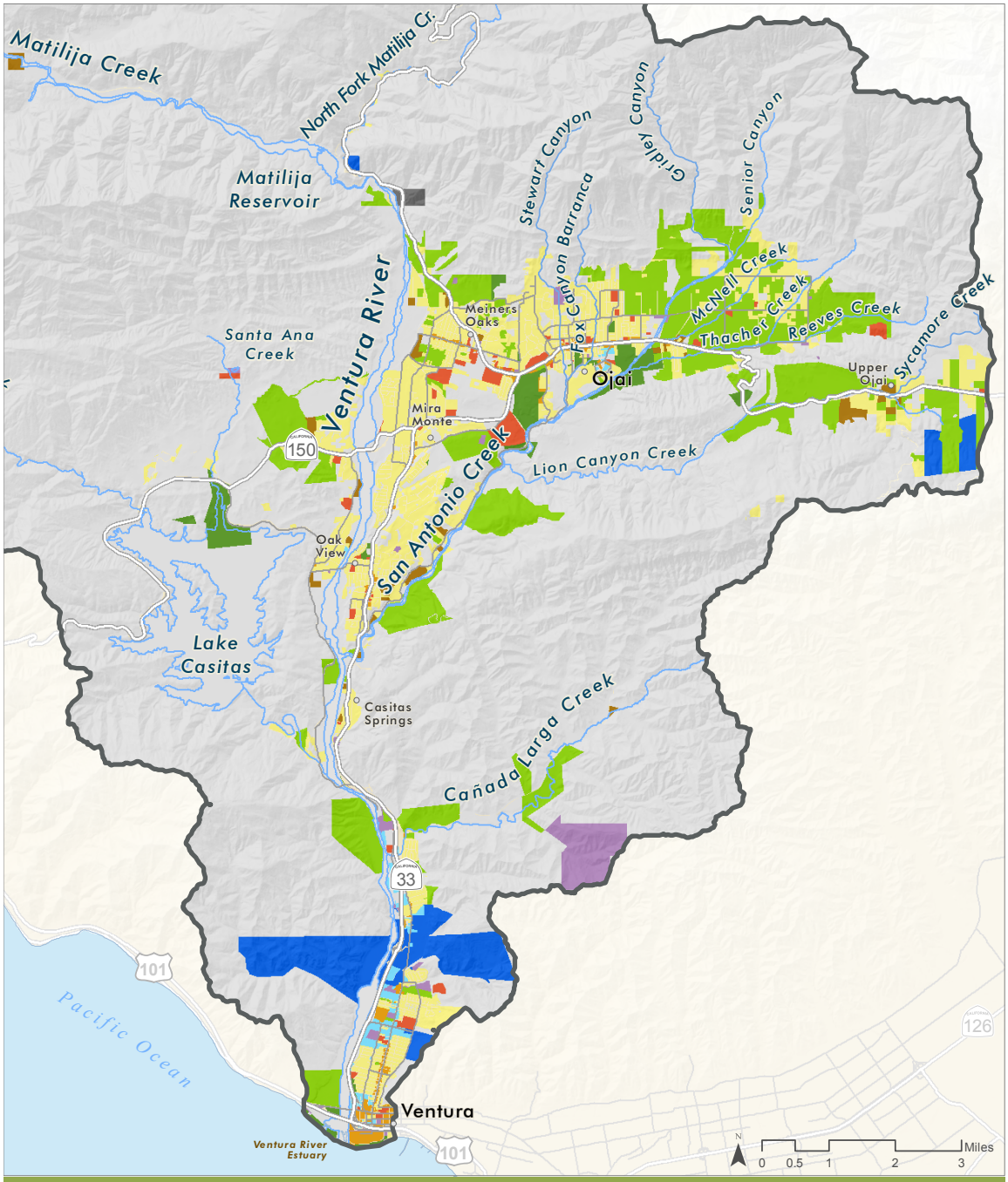
Much of the land in the Ventura River watershed is relatively undeveloped. The northern half (48%) lies within the Los Padres National Forest, and development in the southern half of the watershed has been tempered by traffic, air quality, and land use regulations, and by a scarcity of water.

Developed land uses comprise about 13% of the watershed.

SCAG maintains a land use dataset for areas in southern California. The data, though incomplete, provides a fair estimate of existing land uses. SCAG's 2008 data show that 87% of the watershed's land falls into either the "vacant" or "water" category, which includes the US Forest land, much of the mountains and foothills, along with Lake Casitas and other waterbodies. Developed land uses comprise about 13% of the watershed. Of this 13%, agriculture (excluding grazing lands) makes up about 5%, residential land 4%, oil and mineral extraction 1.5%, and commercial, industrial, and miscellaneous land uses the remaining 2.5%. (Including grazing, agriculture comprises about 18.5% of the land area.)

City of Ventura's Westside. The area of greatest population density in the watershed is in the City of Ventura's Westside.

Much of the watershed's residential area is rural and low density. The area of greatest population density in the City of Ventura's Westside; second is in the City of Ojai and the unincorporated community of Meiners Oaks.



Existing Land Use

Land Use	Acres	% of Watershed
Vacant and Water	126,248	87.16%
Agriculture	7,291	5.03%
Residential	5,933	4.10%
Oil and Mineral Extraction	2,096	1.45%
Open Space and Recreation	914	0.63%
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities	741	0.51%
Government and Institutional	531	0.37%
Horse Ranches	376	0.26%
Commercial	344	0.24%
Industrial	286	0.20%
Unclassified	74	0.05%

Land use designations are by Assessor parcel boundaries

Ventura River Watershed

Ventura River Watershed Council

Data Sources: SCAG (Southern California Area of Governments)
Map Created by GreenInfo Network using Esri software, October 2013 www.greeninfo.org

Figure 3.7.3.1 Existing Land Uses Map

Note: Data represented on this map are coarse and provide only a general view. For example, oil extraction fields are known to cover 5,190 acres (DOGGR 1992). Also, grazing lands are not represented as part of agriculture in these data.

3.7.3.1 Agriculture

Ventura County is one of the principal agricultural counties in California, ranking number nine among California counties in total crop value in 2012. The most recent national data put Ventura County at number 10 among all counties in the United States (FBVC 2015).

Orchards, Ojai Valley's East End
Photo courtesy of Michael McFadden

Acreage and Crops

Agriculture is the dominant land use in the watershed and is a critical factor in the management and stewardship of the land and water. Including cattle grazing, 18.5% of the watershed's land area is used for agriculture. As of January 2015, there were approximately 24,400 acres of agricultural land enrolled in the County's Land Conservation Act program (described below) (VCRMA 2015).

Citrus is the dominant crop grown in the watershed, with a history that dates back to the 1870s when orange orchards were first planted (Fry 1983). The Ojai Valley is home to a number of family farms; some have been in operation over 100 years. Citrus, mostly oranges and tangerines, comprises about 43% of the agricultural crop acreage in the watershed. Avocados rank second at 25%. Other crops include grains, row crops, other tree crops, berries, and grapes.

Orange Harvest, Ojai's East End
Photo courtesy of Michael McFadden

Water from the watershed irrigates over 6,000 acres of agricultural land, including some land outside and adjacent to the watershed (in the Rincon area). Figure 3.7.3.1.1 illustrates the areas in the watershed where various crops are grown. See "3.4.3 Water Demands" for information on water use by agriculture.

Even with the relatively recent addition of a couple of large groundwater-dependent agricultural operations (including Taylor Ranch at the bottom of the watershed), the acreage of irrigated agriculture is trending downward. Irrigated agricultural acreage using Casitas water (either in full or supplemental) has gradually dropped from 6,276 acres in 2000 to 5,264 acres in 2013—a reduction of 1,012 acres, or 16%.

Limitations on Mapped Agricultural Data

Current data sources about the types and acreages of crops grown in the watershed are not comprehensive. The two agriculture maps provided in this section provide different looks at farming in the watershed. Figure 3.7.3.1.1, the "Agricultural Crops" map shows data collected by the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's office as part of their permitting process. In part because it is linked to permit activity, which may be infrequent, it is neither comprehensive nor up-to-date; however, it provides an approximation of the crops grown in the watershed. Figure 3.7.3.1.2, the "Important Farmlands Inventory" shows data from the state's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, which produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called Prime Farmland. The maps are updated every two years with the use of a computer mapping system, aerial imagery, public review, and field reconnaissance.

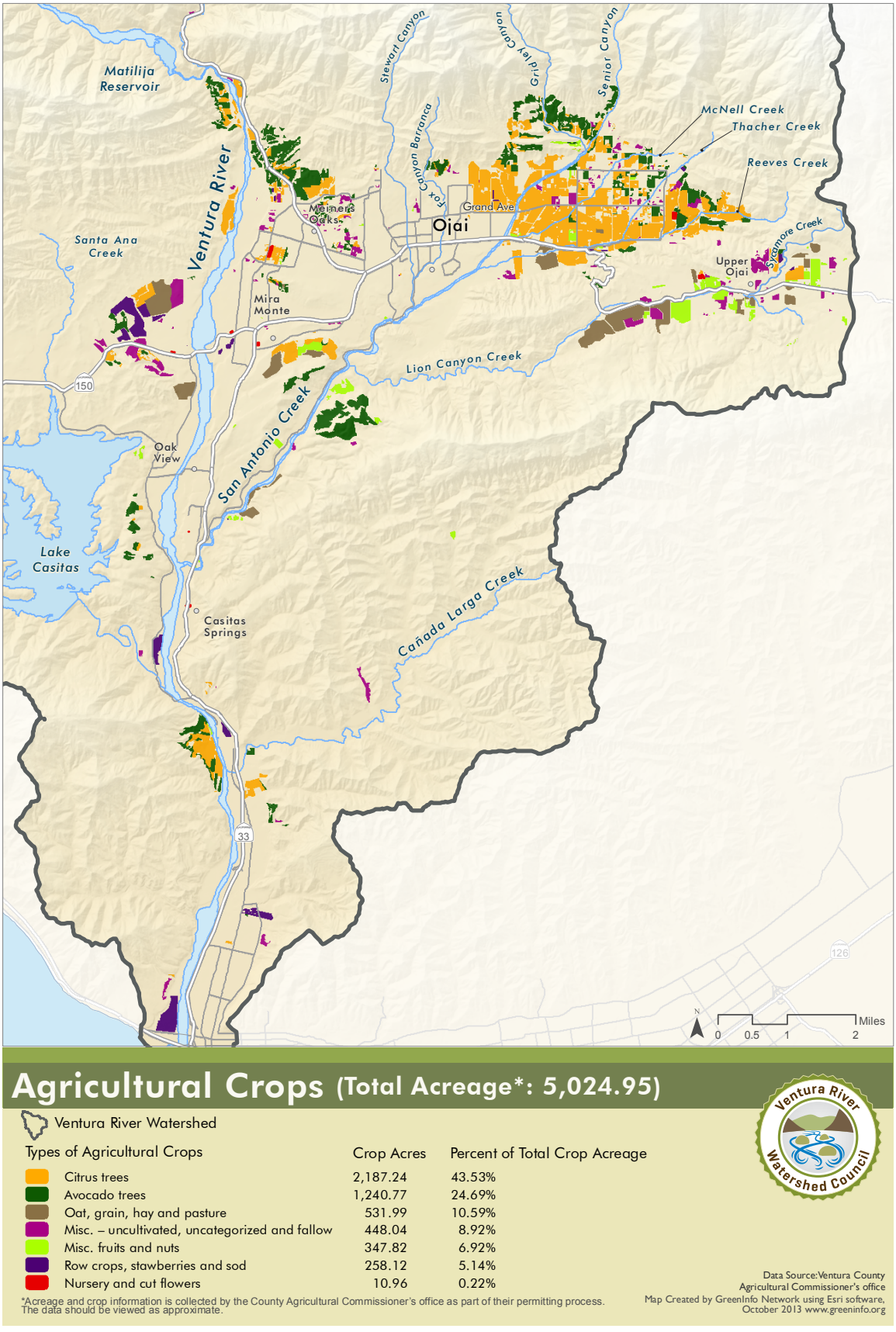


Figure 3.7.3.1.1 Agricultural Crops Map

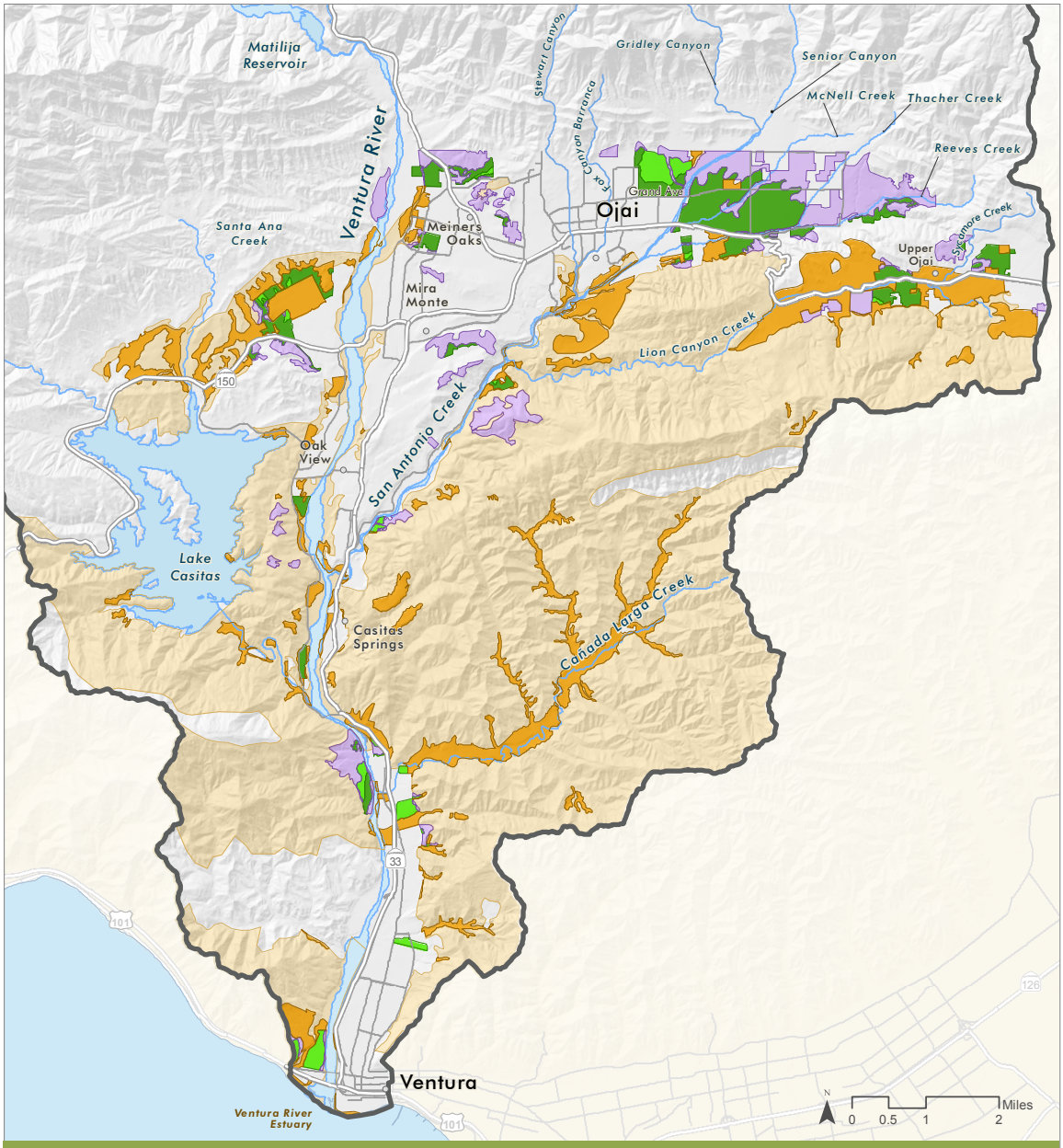
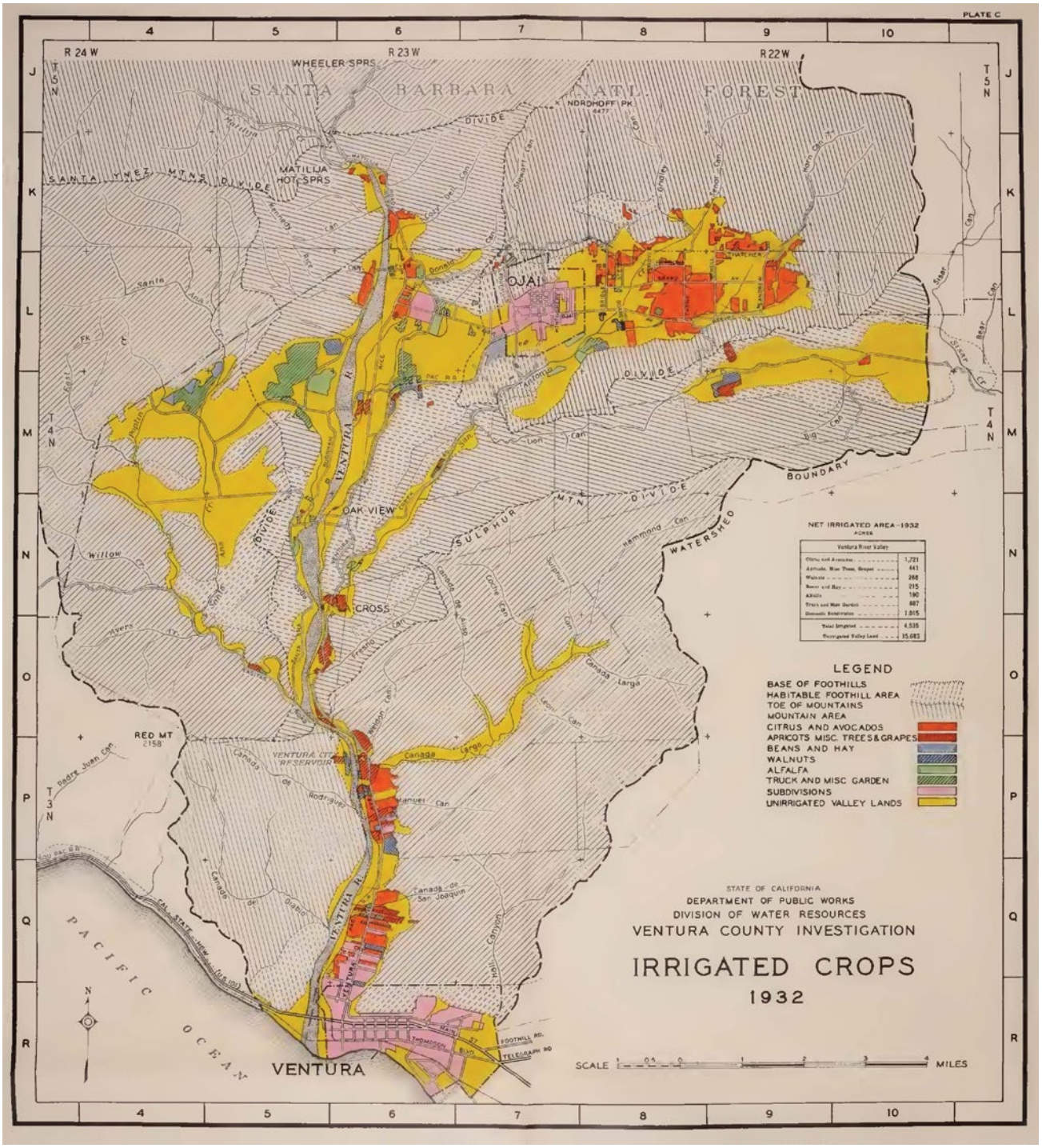


Figure 3.7.3.1.2 Important Farmland Inventory Map



Map of Irrigated Crops, 1932

Source: DWR Bulletin 46 (CDWR 1933)

Hay Harvest, Upper Ojai
Photo Courtesy of Fred Rothenberg

Strawberries, Near Coast
Photo Courtesy of Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

Rincon-Vitova Insectary Beneficial Insect Production Facility on Ventura Avenue. Beneficial insects are being grown on squash.
Photo courtesy of Lisa Brenneis

Integrated Pest Management is used widely by growers in the watershed.

The acreage of certified organic farmland in the watershed is small, however, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is used widely by growers. IPM is an environmentally sensitive approach to pest management. There are many aspects to IPM, but one of them is the cultivation of beneficial insects—insects that kill pests. Growers practicing IPM minimize the use of pesticides that would harm beneficial insects, and provide the habitat needed for them to thrive. Local insectaries regularly supplement existing populations of beneficial insects to target specific pest outbreaks.

Approximately 21,000 acres of land is used for cattle grazing. The majority of this land is privately held.

> During the mid-1800s, the missions were divided into privately owned ranchos. Ventura County contained all or part of 19 ranchos, five of these were in the Ventura River watershed (Rancho Ex-Mission San Buenaventura, Rancho Ojai, Rancho Santa Ana, Rancho Cañada de San Manuelito, and Rancho Cañada Larga o Verde). Of these, only Rancho Cañada Larga is still a working cattle ranch of approximately the same size (about 6,500 acres) as the original land grant.
>
> Cattle and other livestock were prominent throughout the Ventura River watershed through the first half of the 20th century. Taylor Ranch, part of the old Rancho Cañada de San Miguelito on the west side of the Ventura River, operated a 16,000 head feed yard as recently as 1971 (Katz 1987), and a rail yard for shipping cattle existed until the middle of the 20th century at the mouth of Cañada Larga Creek.
>
> There may be close to 1,000 head in the entire watershed in normal years. However, droughts cause a reduction in numbers. A survey conducted by the Ventura County Cattlemen's Association

in 2012, which was the first year of a multi-year drought, reported 612 head on 20,919 acres (Association 2012). After two more consecutive years of drought, cattle numbers are currently likely below 200-300 head.

Operations vary significantly from one ranch to another. Most Ventura River Watershed operations are small, with a majority being cow/calf producers, which maintain their cattle year round. This is done with very low stocking densities to insure adequate forage to last the summer. Some operations also run stockers. These are yearling cattle (6 months to 18 months old) that are brought here in the winter and spring when the grass is good for weight gain. They normally arrive in December or January and stay until June or July depending on rainfall and grass production. Stockers are typically run with higher stocking densities for shorter periods of time.

—*Mike Williams, Ventura County Cattlemen's Association Board Member* (Williams 2014)

Cows in Pasture, Cañada Larga

Photo courtesy of Mike Williams

Benefits from Agricultural Lands

Agriculture plays a critical role in maintaining many services supportive of a healthy watershed. Open agricultural and grazing lands provide expanses of permeable land that infiltrates rainwater, thereby reducing runoff and decreasing the potential for flooding. These lands also serve as wildlife corridors and habitat, and provide attractive views and local food.

Because of the growth restrictions in the Ojai Valley (discussed in "3.7.3.4 Land Use Policies"), profitable land use options are limited. Agriculture is a land use allowed within the growth-restrictions, and relative to other potential land use development options, may offer more watershed benefits and less watershed impacts.

Mountain Lion in Orchard, Ojai's East End, 2015. Orchards provide habitat and movement routes for wildlife.
Photo courtesy of Roger Essick

Citrus on Sale at the Ojai Farmers Market
Photo courtesy of Lisa Brenneis

Trends and Challenges

Though agriculture has long been a part of the landscape in the watershed, its future viability, at least in its current form, is seriously challenged. Water supply issues, high land costs, continued threats from exotic pests, and the challenges of competing in the modern industrial-scale farming business all threaten to destabilize the local industry.

A pressing concern as of early 2015 is the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP).

> Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) is an invasive, aphid-like insect pest. Although the psyllid (SIL-lid) is not a serious problem by itself, it can transmit a devastating bacterial disease to citrus trees. Known as Huanglongbing (HLB), the disease ruins the taste and appearance of citrus fruit, and eventually kills infected trees. There is no treatment or cure for Huanglongbing (wong-long-BING), and all commercially valuable varieties of citrus are vulnerable. If ACP and HLB reach Ventura County, and cannot be eradicated or contained, it is likely that the county will cease to be a significant producer of citrus fruit within a decade.
>
> —*Farm Bureau of Ventura County website* (FBVC 2015a)

Though agriculture has long been a part of the landscape in the watershed, its future viability, at least in its current form, is seriously challenged.

So far, HLB has been found in only one tree in southern California; however, there have been five ACP detections in the Ojai Valley as of January 2015. ACP populations in the adjacent Santa Clara River watershed have increased rapidly. When this pest becomes established growers transition to a suppression strategy employing area-wide treatment—coordinated application of pesticides on a schedule three times per year. Area-wide treatment started in Fillmore and Santa Paula in January 2015. Controlling ACP will have a serious impact on the economic viability of citrus production in Ojai Valley (Brenneis 2015).

Another serious agricultural pest, polyphagous shot hole borer (PSHB), is a new pest in southern California. This boring beetle, from the group of beetles known as ambrosia beetles, drills into trees and brings with it a pathogenic fungus (*Fusarium euwallacea*). The PSHB attacks many species of trees, and avocado is a preferred species. Besides killing avocados, PSHB infestation can destroy most the of dominant tree species in the watershed's riparian habitat including coast and valley oak species, California sycamore, red willow, cottonwood, white alder, and California bay laurel. PSHB impact on avocado production is expected to be serious (UCR 2015).

Switching crops in the watershed is not an easy matter. The soil in the Ojai Valley's East End, where the bulk of the farming occurs, is extremely rocky. Tilling the soil is not an option, which significantly limits the type of crops that can be grown in that area should current crops become untenable.

Oranges Being Taken out of Production, East End Ojai Valley, January 2015

When groundwater basins are low, growers who can purchase water from Lake Casitas at a greater cost. Some growers have no backup water when their wells run dry.

The Ojai Valley is remote from the centers of Ventura County's agricultural infrastructure. Packing houses, agricultural supplies, and support services are miles away. Farm labor crews are also based closer to the center of agricultural production, which makes it more expensive to farm in the watershed.

Concerns about water are growing. Coping with cyclic droughts has always been part of farming in the region, but the 2012-2014 drought (current as of this writing) took the water level in the Ojai Valley Basin down to levels that haven't been seen since 1965.

When groundwater basins are low, growers who can purchase water from Lake Casitas at a greater cost. Some growers have no backup water when their wells run dry. To purchase a new water allocation is prohibitively expensive, and according to Casitas's Water Efficiency and Allocation Program, less than one acre-foot of water remains available to allocate to the agricultural water user category. A great majority of the established agricultural wells and water distribution systems in place now are also old, in some cases inefficient, and in need of costly upgrades.

Agricultural operators face difficult and time-consuming processes required to secure multiple permits for many regular maintenance or improvement activities, such as clearing debris from channels. New water quality requirements and monitoring have added additional and considerable costs.

A changing climate threatens to magnify the threats that agricultural operators face: longer droughts, increased pest threats, increased risk of fires, and weather anomalies that interfere with fruit setting and plant growth.

3.7.3.2 Oil Extraction & Industry

As with agriculture, the oil extraction industry has a long history in the watershed.

> Drawn to Ventura County by reports of "oil struggling to the surface at every available point," George Shoobridge Gilbert, referred to as California's first true petroleum pioneer, began extraction operations at Sulphur Mountain in 1861 (Triem, 1985)… In 1854, oil collected at Sulphur Mountain was refined in home-made stills. The first commercial oil refinery in the county was built in 1861 by Gilbert. It was located in the Ojai Valley and produced between 300 and 400 gallons of refined oil a week (DOG, 1983).

Oil Drilling, Ventura Avenue Area, 1928

Photo courtesy of Museum of Ventura County

Aera Energy

Aera Energy LLC is the primary oil and gas producer in the watershed. Their production averages 13,900 barrels per day of crude oil and 7.8 mmcf per day of natural gas. Oil is transported to refineries in the Los Angeles basin. Natural gas is shipped to Southern California Gas Co. Much of the operation in the watershed is now in secondary recovery water injection. Over 110 employees work directly for Aera in Ventura, and over 600 contractors are employed at the site for daily operations and development.

By the 1880's almost all of the State's oil production was in Ventura County, as the discoveries at Sulphur Mountain, Rancho Ojai, Rancho Sespe, and Rancho Santa Paula became known (DOG, 1983). The most successful early well, discovered in 1865, was "Ojai 6", which is considered to be the first oil well in California to produce commercially (Triem, 1985).

Ventura County experienced tremendous population growth during the 1920's due primarily to the discovery of the Ventura Avenue Oil Field in 1916. By 1926, this field was producing over 20,000 barrels of oil a day and its level of productivity brought in thousands of oilworkers, geologists, engineers, and oil-related businesses to the City of Ventura and outlying areas (Triem, 1985).

—*Ventura County General Plan Resources Appendix* (VCPD 2011)

The Transverse Ranges, of which the watershed is part, is a highly folded and faulted geologic province that has some petroleum-rich sedimentary rocks; this province is an important oil-producing area in the United States. Oil extraction is a significant commercial land use in the watershed, making up about 3.6% of the land area.

Oil Extraction, Lower Ventura River

Photo by Brian Hall, Courtesy of Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and LightHawk

The major oil field in the watershed is the Ventura oil field, an area that covers approximately 3,410 acres on both sides of Highway 33 in the lower watershed near the coast. The Ojai oil field comprises 1,780 acres of active fields (DOGGR 1992). There are over 700 active oil wells in the watershed. In the Ventura oil field an extensive system of well pads and paved and dirt access roads cover the relatively steep and rugged foothills. Figure 3.7.3.2.1 shows the locations of these wells.

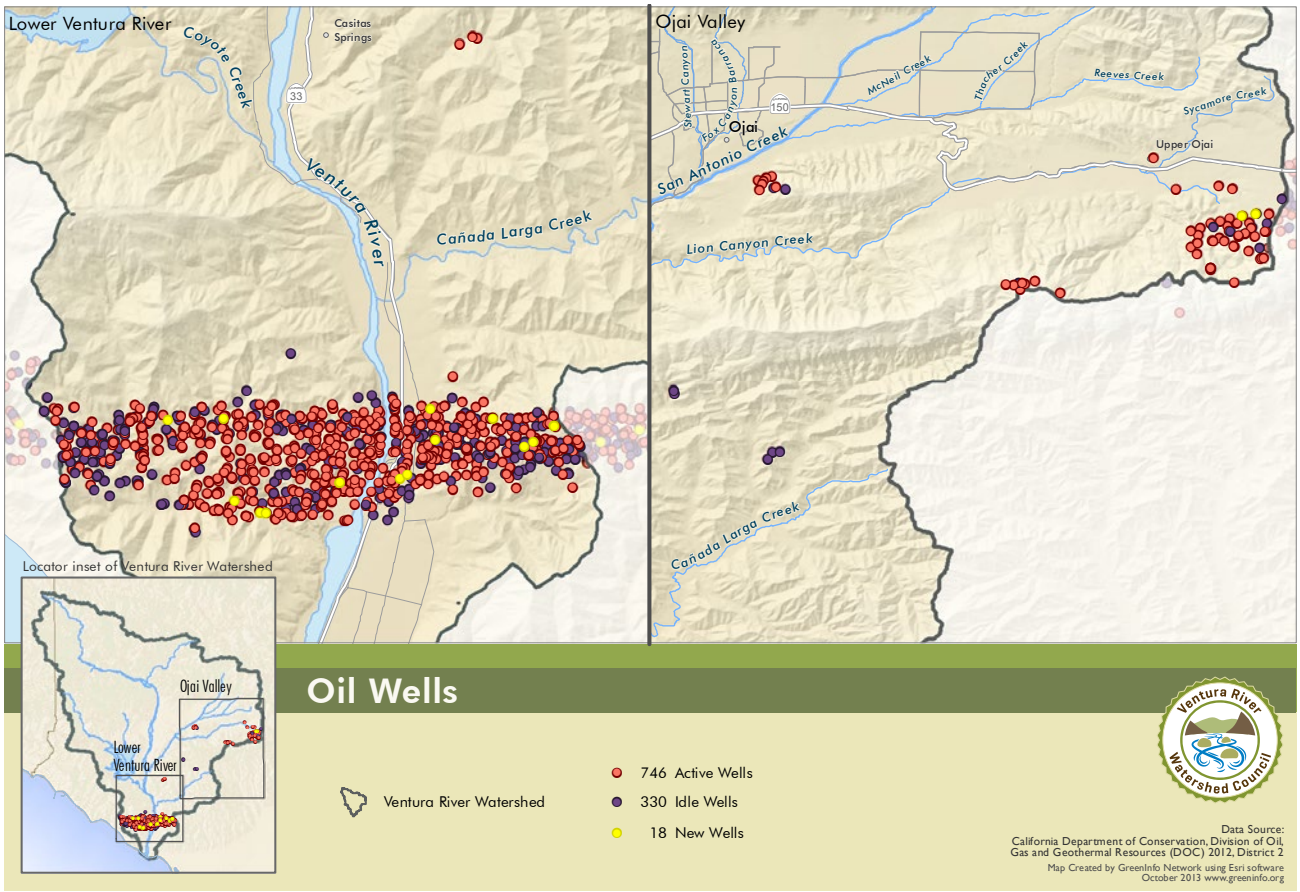


Figure 3.7.3.2.1 Oil Wells Map

Outside of oil fields, the watershed's major industrial land use is in the lower watershed along Ventura Avenue east of the Ventura River. Various manufacturing, construction, processing, and industrial storage facilities occupy this area, a number of which serve as support services to the oil extraction industry.

Brownfields

Brownfields are properties whose reuse, redevelopment, or expansion is hindered by real or perceived environmental contamination. They can be large or small, vacant or developed, abandoned or occupied. Brownfield sites commonly sit idle, or cannot be sold, until contamination concerns are resolved. However, the costs of doing so can be prohibitive.

By the late 1930s, the City of Ventura's Westside was densely occupied with oil wells and related facilities. Oil-related industries and service companies located in the area in support of the growing oil industry and as the Westside became more industrially developed, other industries also gravitated to the area. Besides the oilfields and the Petrochem refinery, industries that have been located in the Westside area include:

- Oilfield companies providing services such as wireline, perforating, well workovers, etc.
- Oil tool and machine shops
- Vacuum truck services
- Oilfield pipe and equipment storage yards
- Waste disposal services that included sumps
- Chemical suppliers
- Oilfield equipment manufacturing
- Rock quarries
- Metal recycling facilities
- A natural gas compression plant
- Bulk fuel storage and sales
- Commercial laundry
- Auto salvage yards
- Metal fabrication
- Various light manufacturing (WCEE 2011)

There are an estimated 30 brownfields in the Ventura Avenue area on the City of Ventura's Westside.

By the 1990s, much of the oil and oil supporting industry had left the Westside area, leaving behind many industrial facilities and the perception that these sites could be contaminated. Today, there are an estimated 30 brownfields in the Ventura Avenue area on the City of Ventura's Westside (City of San Buenaventura 2005). The contaminants potentially associated with these industries include toxic metals, petroleum solvents, chlorinated solvents, semi-volatile hydrocarbons, polychlorinated biphenyls, caustics, and acids (WCEE 2001).

Programs exist at the State and Federal levels to assist communities with assessing and cleaning up brownfields and preparing them for redevelopment. The USEPA's Brownfields Program includes assessment grants, loans, job training grants, and cleanup grants (USEPA 2013c). Unfortunately, due to a federal "petroleum exclusion," which excludes many petroleum-based products (such as crude oil, gasoline, and diesel fuels) from the definition of hazardous substance, funding for rehabilitation of brownfields may not be used on properties with only petroleum-based contaminants (WCEE 2001). Therefore, several sites along Ventura Avenue remain in disrepair, but have not been eligible to

receive brownfield-related funding because of the petroleum exclusion policy provision.

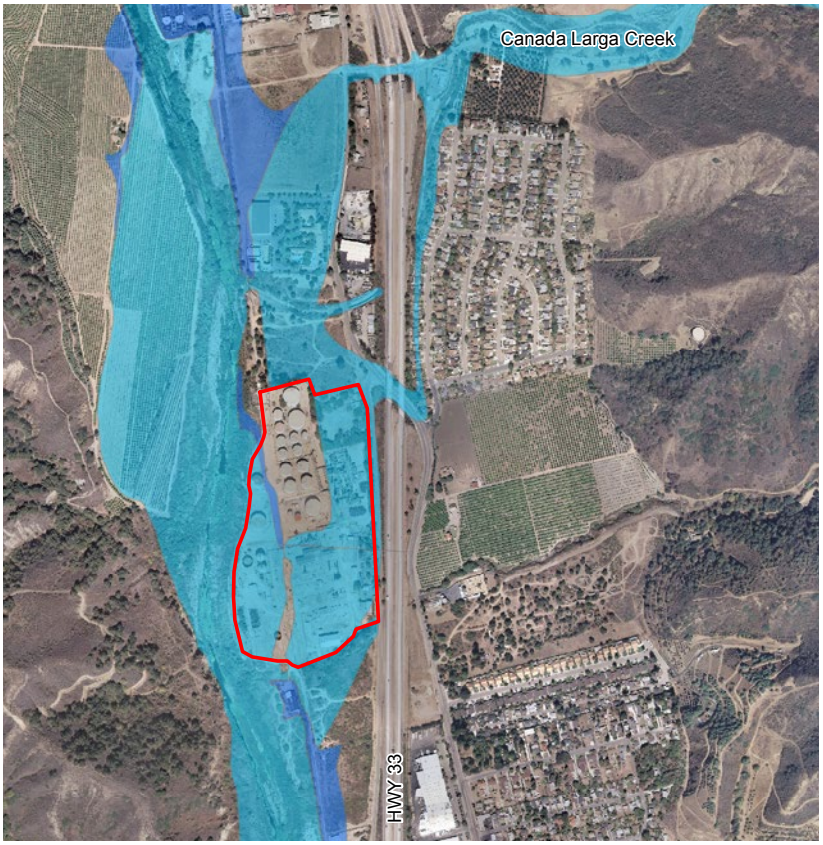
One of the actions (Action 4.26) identified in the City of Ventura's General Plan is to "Seek funding for cleanup of sites within the Brownfield Assessment Demonstration Pilot Program and other contaminated areas in West Ventura." (City of San Buenaventura 2005)

Abandoned Petrochem Refinery

The watershed is home to one brownfield, known as "Petrochem," that is a familiar site to anyone driving between Ojai and Ventura. This large, blighted and abandoned oil refinery has been part of the landscape in the lower Ventura River for decades. The 98-acre facility is located on the east side of the Ventura River and west of Crooked Palm Road, just south of Brooks School of Photography.

Most of the site is located within the 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) flood zone (formerly called the 100-year flood zone). When abandoned, the sited contained refining units; a tank farm; ammonia, nitric acid, and urea plants; and six underground storage tanks (UST) that stored motor vehicle fuel and fuel additives (Shaw 2005).

Abandoned Petrochem Facility
Photo courtesy of Michael McFadden



Petrochem Site in Flood Hazard Zone Map. Petrochem site footprint in red; 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) flood zone (formerly called the 100-year flood zone) in light blue.

Operational History. Originally a lemon orchard, the site was purchased by Shell Oil Company in 1952 (CDHS 1985). Shell Oil built the Kellogg ammonia plant in 1953, which was expanded in 1959. Ammonia and urea were sold for use as fertilizers to local agricultural operations (Shaw 2005). In 1969, the plant survived a severe flood. One tank, which normally contained a solution of ammonium nitrate and urea, was lost; but the overall impact on the plant was minor (VCERA 1974). The Kellogg system was shut down in 1972 because of the poor ammonia market (VCERA 1976).

The California Oil Purification Company (COPCO) purchased the land from Shell Oil and was grated a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 1973 to construct and operate an oil refinery (VCERA 1976). U.S.A. Petroleum acquired COPCO in 1973 and started operations in 1974 (CDHS 1985). In November 1974 COPCO was granted a CUP to reactivate the ammonia plant and expand their oil processing and storage tank facilities (VCERA 1976).

Shut Down. In 1983, U.S.A. Petroleum submitted an application to the County to expand the facility. The proposal was strongly opposed by local groups. Citizens to Preserve the Ojai (CPO) filed suit challenging that the County's Environmental Impact Report did not adequately address the cumulative air quality impacts because it did not evaluate the onshore effect of outer continental emissions (Citizens to Preserve the Ojai v. County of Ventura, 1985). CPO won the case.

Abandoned Petrochem Facility. The refinery was shut down in 1984, and has been sitting idle since.

The refinery ceased operation in 1984 (VCEHD 2008) and has sat idle ever since—corroding, rusting, and providing creative opportunities for local graffiti artists. Signs warning of contamination are posted along the perimeter of the property.

Monitoring and Cleanup. Since 1989, various soil and groundwater investigations have been conducted at the site. These investigations have included the installation of exploratory soil borings and a number of monitoring wells (VCEHD 2008). As different monitoring and cleanup efforts have progressed, new monitoring wells have been required in additional locations, some to further define the property's subsurface soil and groundwater impacts.

Six underground storage tanks and associated contaminated soils were removed in 1989 (Shaw 2005), and additional hydrocarbon-contaminated soil has been discovered over the years and requirements issued for its excavation and removal.

A 2005 report concluded that: "A defined plume of groundwater impact exists on the site" (Shaw 2005). In 2006, soil and groundwater assessments indicated that residual hydrocarbons were present in capillary fringe soils and in "pooled" groundwater present in the underground storage tank/dispenser island excavation (VCEHD 2008).

In 2012, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) issued an enforcement order to USA Petroleum Corporation related to discharges of oil contaminants at the site. The action also transferred to the USEPA jurisdiction over cleanup operations at the facility.

"The location of the oil discharge noticed herein is in multiple locations throughout the refinery, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") has determined that the discharge of oil was created by leaking pipes, process equipment and tanks that threatens the Ventura River." (USEPA 2012a) The order called for the removal of all "oil, oily sludge,

oil contaminated soil, oil contaminated debris, oily water or refining chemicals." In a May 2014 letter, the USEPA determined that there was no evidence of an ongoing threat to the Ventura River from the facility and that all required removal actions had been met (USEPA 2014).

The County and the current owner of the property have entered into an agreement which calls for the removal of the remainder of the refinery equipment by the end of 2015. Through the efforts of the County and the property owner, all of the oil storage tanks and most of the equipment outside of the main refinery were demolished and removed in 2014 (Stephens 2015).

Development Proposals. There have been a number of proposals for development of the Petrochem site since its closure. Repurposing the site faces many challenges. There is the expense and liability of cleaning it up, along with the fact that it is in the 1% AEP flood zone.

There are overlapping land use jurisdiction issues to overcome. While the property is located in the County unincorporated area, and therefore subject to the County's land use policies, it is also in the City of Ventura's Sphere of Influence. Because the property can be annexed into the City, the City would also need to support any development proposed on the site. The City would like a project that provides jobs; the County has traffic policies that precluded increased peak traffic on Highway 33. The City would like mixed use; the County's development code does not provide for mixed use. Annexation by the City would be appropriate if the site were to be developed, given the County's Guidelines for Orderly Development. However, the City would have to carefully consider whether the cost to extend City services to the property makes good financial sense.

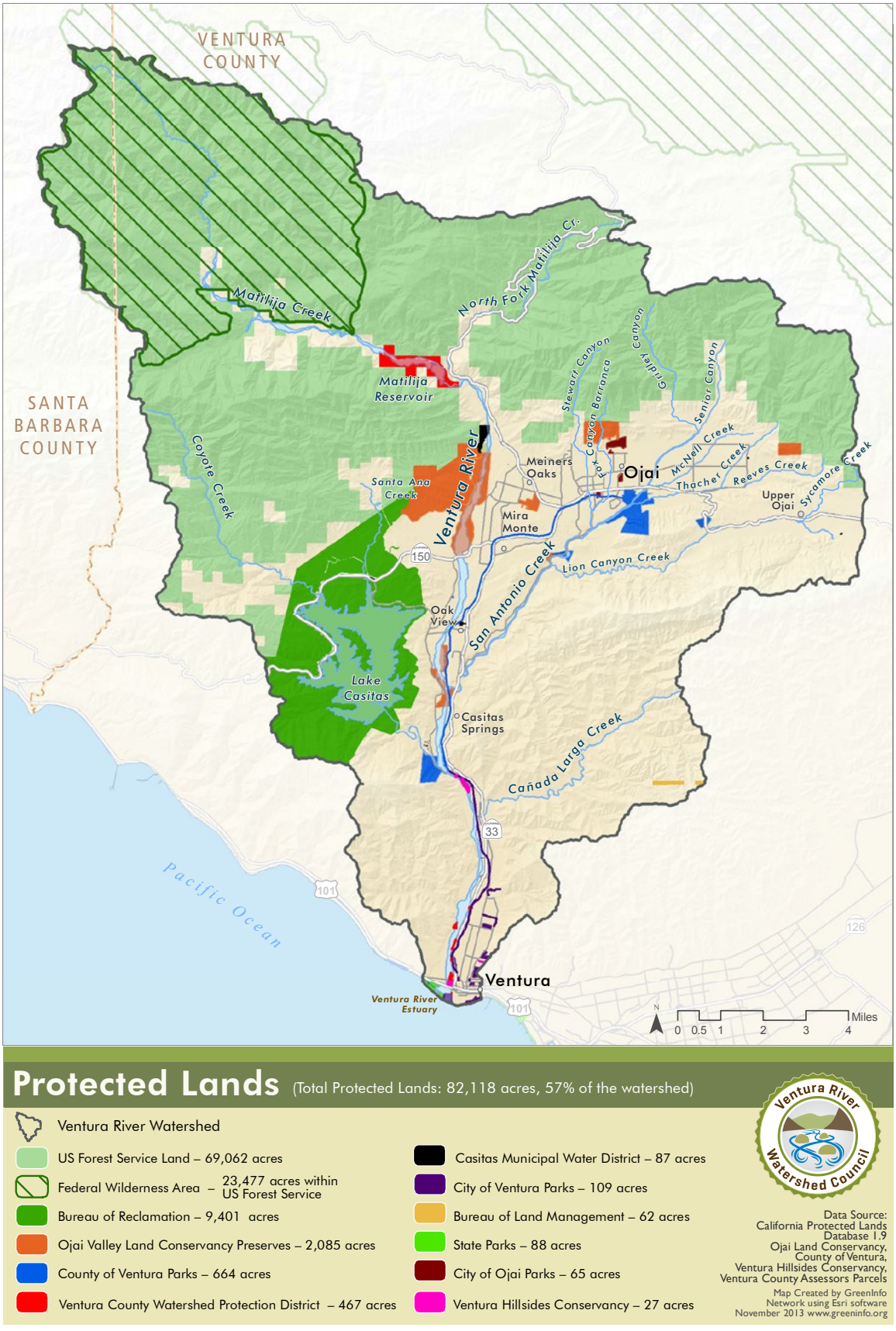
The most recent development proposal included a proposed dedication of about half of the 98-acre site—the land nearest the river—for preservation purposes.

3.7.3.3 Protected Lands

As illustrated in Figure 3.7.3.3.1, protected lands make up a significant part—57%—of the Ventura River watershed.

The Bureau of Reclamation owns 9,401 acres (6.5%) of the watershed surrounding Lake Casitas. Another 3,655 acres (2.5%) is protected as natural habitat, open space, or parkland.

Two local land conservancies, along with the California Coastal Conservancy, are actively acquiring special habitat lands and, in many cases, making those lands accessible to the public to enjoy. Figure 3.7.3.3.2 shows the areas of interest of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy and the Ventura Hillsides Land Conservancy.



Protected Lands (Total Protected Lands: 82,118 acres, 57% of the watershed)

- Ventura River Watershed
- US Forest Service Land – 69,062 acres
- Federal Wilderness Area – 23,477 acres within US Forest Service
- Bureau of Reclamation – 9,401 acres
- Ojai Valley Land Conservancy Preserves – 2,085 acres
- County of Ventura Parks – 664 acres
- Ventura County Watershed Protection District – 467 acres
- Casitas Municipal Water District – 87 acres
- City of Ventura Parks – 109 acres
- Bureau of Land Management – 62 acres
- State Parks – 88 acres
- City of Ojai Parks – 65 acres
- Ventura Hillsides Conservancy – 27 acres

Ventura River Watershed Council

Data Source:
California Protected Lands Database 1.9
Ojai Land Conservancy, County of Ventura, Ventura Hillsides Conservancy, Ventura County Assessors Parcels

Map Created by GreenInfo Network using Esri software
November 2013 www.greeninfo.org

Figure 3.7.3.3.1 Protected Lands Map

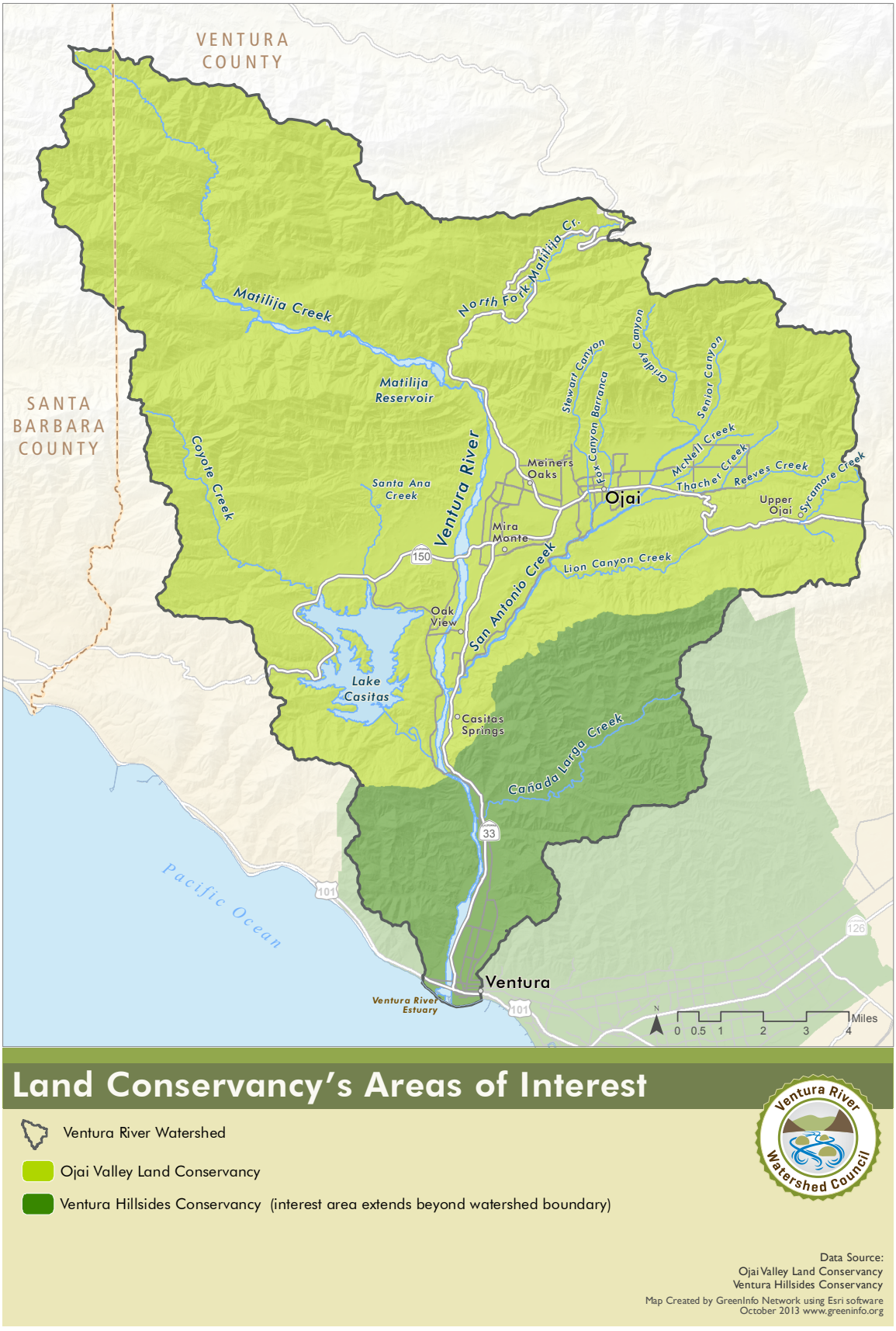


Figure 3.7.3.3.2 Land Conservancy's Areas of Interest Map

3.7.3.4 Local Land Use Policies

Development is unusually limited in the Ventura River watershed. There are a number of reasons for this. Steep terrain is one factor: only 35 out of the watershed's total 226 square miles have a slope of 10% or less. Citizen activism is another reason. Even before the passage of the California Environmental Quality Act, the Endangered Species Act, and other policies that now serve to protect resources and balance growth, citizens in the watershed were actively engaged in protecting local landscapes. Development proposals—such as one to build a freeway through Ojai from Carpinteria to Santa Paula, and another to mine uranium in Lake Casitas's watershed—were stopped due in large part to citizen activism (Coyne 2009).

Finally, local land use policies and regulations have played and continue to play a very significant role in shaping development on privately owned land in the watershed. This section summarizes some of those key policies and regulations. The water supply management policies of Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD) also play a significant role in constraining development. See "3.4.3 Water Demands" for a discussion of CMWD's policies.

Local land use policies and regulations have played and continue to play a very significant role in shaping development on privately owned land in the watershed.

Key current land use policies include:

- Ventura County:
  - Guidelines for Orderly Development
  - Ojai Valley Area Plan, Minimum Parcel Size & Traffic Policies
  - Ventura County SOAR Ordinance
- City of Ojai's Growth Control Policies
- City of Ventura:
  - City of Ventura SOAR Ordinance
  - Infill First

Guidelines for Orderly Development

In the world of land use planning, Ventura County is held up as a national model for successfully limiting the sprawl-type of development that has characterized much of California. The County's Guidelines for Orderly Development (Guidelines) has been a key policy in this regard. Originally adopted by the County of Ventura and the Local Agency Formation Commission in 1969, and since adopted by all the cities in the County, the Guidelines represent a unique cooperative land use policy.

The Guidelines establish the shared, countywide objective that urban development should occur, whenever and wherever practical, within incorporated cities and not in the unincorporated county (VCPD 2009).

This policy helps prevent urban encroachment into agricultural and open space areas.

According to the Guidelines (VCPD 2009) development shall be considered "urban" if it meets any of the following criteria:

1. It would require the establishment of new community sewer systems or the significant expansion of existing community sewer systems
2. It would result in the creation of residential lots less than two (2) acres in area; or
3. It would result in the establishment of commercial or industrial uses which are neither agriculturally-related nor related to the production of mineral resources.

In the world of land use planning, Ventura County is held up as a national model for successfully limiting the sprawl-type of development that has characterized much of California.

The objective is to allow "for urbanization in a manner that will accommodate the development goals of the individual communities while conserving the resources of Ventura County," as well as to promote "efficient and effective delivery of community services for existing and future residents." (VCPD 2009)

The Guidelines also have policies to ensure that any proposed development in communities that already exist in the unincorporated county is consistent with the intent of the Guidelines.

The result of the implementation of the Guidelines has been that the County does not compete for urban development with cities (LAFCO 2014), and this has helped maintain distinct boundaries between communities, and distinguish urban and rural areas. In the Ventura River watershed, where incorporated cities only comprise 3% of the land area, this is an especially relevant policy.

General Plans

State law mandates that each city and county in California prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of that jurisdiction. General plans set forth the goals, policies, and programs that jurisdiction will implement to manage future growth and land uses. General plans are intended to embody the vision for the future of the jurisdiction. (Government Code Sec. 65300)

Ojai Valley Area Plan

The Ventura County General Plan (VCGP) includes several "area plans" that contain goals, policies, and programs to shape development in specific geographic areas. Area plans are consistent with the overarching VCGP, but address the particular needs and nuances of a given location. Two area plans are applicable in the Ventura River watershed: Ojai Valley Area Plan and North Ventura Avenue Area Plan. The Ojai Valley Area Plan, which covers a vast area of the watershed and has been important in shaping the watershed's development, is discussed below. The North Ventura Avenue Area Plan covers a much smaller area, much of which is already developed.