

## 4.1 Vision



In order to guide the development of the One Water One Watershed (OWOW) 1.0 Plan, the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA), working with the Steering Committee and Pillars, established a vision along with goals and objectives for the watershed that would allow a holistic approach to resource management. Since the adoption of the OWOW 1.0 Plan and the kick off of the OWOW 2.0 Plan, a process began to reevaluate the goals and objectives again in order to fine tune them based on additional information and to ensure that OWOW goals and objectives could be monitored for progress in watershed improvement. Much of this reevaluation was prompted by the development of a new tool discussed later in **Chapter 9 Data Management and Plan Performance/ Monitoring**, known as the Santa Ana River Watershed Assessment.

### Vision

Prior to embarking on any major regional planning effort involving multiple stakeholders, the stakeholder values and principles needed to be established to serve as a foundation to the work ahead. With a firm foundation in place, a vision of the future could be defined with steps to accomplish that vision defined in a plan mission, goals and objectives. For the initial OWOW Plan, this work was conducted in late 2007 as the first step in the development of the OWOW 1.0 Plan. To define these parameters, SAWPA, with the consulting support of Bob Ohland of Stantec, led a two-day eco-charette workshop with the OWOW Steering Committee and the Pillar Leader group to create a holistic approach to resource management. This event provided an interactive and thought-provoking forum to discuss ideas and priorities in the pursuit of sustainable water resources and to discuss and take a first step toward developing goals and objectives for the watershed. In depth discussions were held regarding the values and principles that

would be used as guiding principles for the Pillars to follow in the development the OWOW IRWMP. Further, the eco-charette format served to provide a consensus of the OWOW leadership values and principles, challenges, and strategies via group input and voting mechanisms to refine and enhance the overall vision of the group.

The results of that initial foundational workshop continue today and remain largely unchanged as the foundation to our current watershed planning under the OWOW 2.0 Plan. It is recognized that as new watershed challenges arise, fiscal and energy crises, dubbed the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Horsemen of the Apocalypse under **Chapter 1.0 One Water One Watershed Program**, SAWPA governance must adapt and reevaluate the specific goals and objectives of the watershed plan to fine tune and focus regional efforts to affect positive change. Further, with improved tools and tracking systems to monitor progress in attaining watershed goals, we now have the capability to establish indicators of change so that the performance can be assessed. With development of the indicators, the language of the goals and objectives for the OWOW 2.0 Plan were redefined and clarified.

## OWOW Vision and Mission

The vision of the OWOW Plan is:

1. A watershed that is sustainable, drought-proofed and salt-balanced by 2035, and in which water resources are protected and water is used efficiently
2. A watershed that supports economic and environmental viability
3. A watershed that is adaptable to climate change
4. A watershed in which environmental justice deficiencies are corrected
5. A watershed in which interruptions to natural hydrology are minimized
6. A water ethic is created at the institutional and personal level

Listed below is a summary of the issues that rose to the top as priorities at the eco-charette.

## Values

- Sustainability
- Comprehensive Water Strategy
- Smart Growth/Urban Centers Communities
- Maintain Quality of Life

With an established values, vision and mission, the OWOW Steering Committee conveyed a sense of urgency that moderately aggressive to aggressive planning was needed. Furthermore, they were effective in conveying direction to produce a plan that is more aggressive in taking steps to plan for major changes in how developing, protecting, and conserving water is approached. At the end of the eco-charette, the general direction was as follows:

- There was a shared understanding that all water within the Santa Ana River Watershed is a precious resource. Climate change, continuing Colorado River drought, questions about the San Joaquin Bay Delta's vulnerability and its ability to reliably deliver water to southern California, and interruptions

to the hydrologic cycle as the result of our very own successful growth and development will stress our ability to provide sufficient water to supply to our Watershed for economic and environmental sustainability.

- There was an expressed commitment to invest time and resources for high quality planning, both long-range and short-range, to ensure the best possible outcome and to achieve the stated mission of making the Santa Ana River Watershed drought-proofed, salt-balanced, and to continue its economic and environmental vitality.
- As major paradigm changes are being considered, the quality of life of the residents must be protected, and the economic impact of a recommended change must be understood before implementation.
- The group indicated through voting that in order to meet these challenges, the leadership in the watershed would need to consider significant review of current practices and expectations. The best solutions would likely engender new ways of thinking about water use and its value.
- There was acknowledgment that while many advances would need to be made in conservation and water use efficiency, the planning process should consider if agricultural water conservation measures could free up water for urban use, or if water could be purchased from agriculture for urban use.
- There was a commitment to employ emerging technologies to further urban water efficiencies and to develop new water supplies.

The next step was the establishment of a set of principles to guide the watershed planning. These principles serve as the guiding rules or qualities that most people can support and reflect the essential elements for planning of water resources in the Santa Ana River Watershed.

### Principles for Watershed Planning

- The planning process must be watershed-wide and bottom-up in order to allow for a holistic and systematic approach to watershed management.
- It is necessary to involve stakeholders representing counties, cities, and water districts, as well as the private sector and the regulatory, environmental, and environmental justice communities. The active participation of this diverse group of stakeholders integrates the different interests in the watershed beyond political boundaries.
- The OWOW Plan and the projects included therein must pursue multiple objectives beyond the “traditional” objective of providing reliable water, and include ensuring reliable water supply, ensuring high quality water for all users, preserving and enhancing the environment, promoting sustainable water solutions, managing rainfall as a resource, preserving open-space and recreational opportunities, maintaining quality of life (including addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities), providing economically effective solutions, and improving regional integration and coordination.
- The OWOW Plan must continue the paradigm change already in play from water supply to an integral water management mentality: moving from a mission of providing abundant high-quality water at the lowest cost possible, to one in which water resources are managed in a sustainable manner and with regard for the needs of the environment.

- Watershed-wide planning must transcend specific funding opportunities (e.g. State grants).
- The implementation of the Plan must result in agreements among the Watershed stakeholders on how to manage and operate the watershed.
- The Plan must improve life conditions throughout the watershed, ensuring that an improvement in the welfare of one area is not at the expense of others.

Generally, the consensus is that the OWOW effort needs to be bold and innovative to meet the watershed's vision.

