



*The Watershed Approach
According to the U.S. EPA, effective watershed management results in a focus on priority problems; community building wherein stakeholder partners collaborate to seek local solutions; cost savings for regulators, and predictability for those regulated.*

Water Quality

Water quality problems that have occurred in Riverside County have related to inadequate subsurface sewage disposal, waste disposal management of the Santa Ana River, agriculturally-related problems such as citricultural runoff in the western County and increasing salinity of the desert groundwater basins, sediment buildup of water bodies from construction-related erosion, lake water quality problems, and pollution due to urban stormwater system runoff. Regional Water Quality Control Boards for Regions 7, 8, and 9 provide state-level water quality policy for the County. Further, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination system mandates Best Management Practices in order to effectively minimize the adverse effects of pollution and protect water quality. The following policies are intended to provide local guidance for the protection and maintenance of water quality in Riverside County.

Policies:

- OS 3.1 Encourage innovative and creative techniques for wastewater treatment, including the use of local water treatment plants.
- OS 3.2 Encourage wastewater treatment innovations in rural areas.
- OS 3.3 Minimize pollutant discharge into storm drainage systems and natural drainage and aquifers. (AI 3)

Groundwater Recharge

Groundwater resources in the County are defined by their quality as well as quantity. Most groundwater basins within Riverside County store local and imported water for later use to meet seasonal and drought-year demands. Under these groundwater recharge programs, groundwater is artificially replenished in wet years with surplus imported water. Water is then extracted during drought years or during emergency situations. Groundwater recharge that may also involve the recharge of reclaimed water, enhances the region’s ability to meet water demand during years of short supply, and increases overall local supply reliability. In order to facilitate groundwater recharge, the following policies may apply:

Policies:

- OS 4.1 Support efforts to create additional water storage where needed, in cooperation with federal, state, and local water authorities. Additionally, support and/or engage in water banking in conjunction with these agencies where appropriate, as needed. (AI 56, 57)
- OS 4.2 Participate in the development, implementation, and maintenance of a program to recharge the aquifers underlying the County. The program shall make use of flood and other waters to offset existing and future groundwater pumping, except where:
 - a. groundwater quality would be reduced;
 - b. available groundwater aquifers are full; or
 - c. rising water tables threaten the stability of existing structures. (AI 56, 57)



Water banking is a key factor for meeting future water supply needs in southern California. Historically, groundwater extractions have exceeded natural recharge in this region, resulting in declining water levels and water quality. Using groundwater basins for water banking during wet periods will help alleviate southern California’s water supply problems.