



2019

United Water
Conservation District

**Strategic Plan:
Bringing Expertise
to Action**



2019

United Water Conservation District **Strategic Plan: Bringing Expertise to Action**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Daniel C. Naumann, *President*
Michael W. Mobley, *Vice President*
Bruce E. Dandy, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Sheldon G. Berger
Robert Eranio
Lynn E. Maulhardt
Edwin T. McFadden III

MANAGEMENT STAFF

Mauricio E. Guardado, *General Manager*
Anthony Emmert, *Assistant General Manager*
Robert C. Siemak, *Assistant General Manager*
Maryam Bral, *Chief Engineer*
Brian Collins, *O&M Manager*
Joseph Jereb, *Chief Financial Officer*
Josh Perez, *Human Resources Manager*
Kris Sofley, *Executive Assistant*

PREPARED BY





SURFACE WATER
DELIVERY TO EL RIO
SPREADING BASINS

CONTENTS

I	Introduction	1
	Agency History	2
	Governance	2
	Funding	2
	Facilities and Strategies	2
II	Current Trends, Issues and Opportunities	7
III	Strategic Plan Framework.	11
	Mission, Vision, Values.	12
	Mission-Related Goals and Objectives.	14
	Mission-Supportive Goals and Objectives	15
	Appendix	
	UWCD Organizational Structure	19





INTRODUCTION

The United Water Conservation District Strategic Plan serves as a blueprint for decision-making for the upcoming budget fiscal year and subsequent fiscal years. This document is forward thinking and reflects careful consideration on the part of the Board of Directors and District staff for the long-term health of the organization and its ability to meet current and future water needs.

The District works to meet a diverse set of expectations and requirements based on the needs and priorities of its many customers and stakeholders.

Agency History

Since 1927, United Water Conservation District (United) has distinguished itself as a leader among water agencies by conserving and enhancing water resources of the Santa Clara River while working to protect the river's natural features. United continues to enhance water supplies through groundwater replenishment, and through the construction and operation of water supply and delivery systems.

Situated in central Ventura County, the District encompasses the fertile Santa Clara River Valley and Oxnard Coastal Plain. This 214,000 acre area receives from 12 to 20 inches of rainfall each year. Year-round agriculture flourishes in the mild, Mediterranean- type climate.

Today, United serves as the conservator of groundwater resources that are utilized by the cities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Santa Paula, and Fillmore, as well as several mutual water districts and numerous farms and individual pumpers. It also provides surface water for agricultural irrigation and provides treated drinking water to the cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme.

United conserves runoff from all major tributaries of the Santa Clara River within the District, including Piru, Hopper, Sespe, and Santa Paula Creeks. Otherwise, much of this water would simply flow out to sea.

Governance

Formed in 1950, United Water Conservation District consists of a 60-member team of water professionals, including four civil engineers, five

hydrogeologists, and a surface water hydrologist. A seven-member, elected Board of Directors governs the agency's policy-making activities dedicated to water conservation and protection.

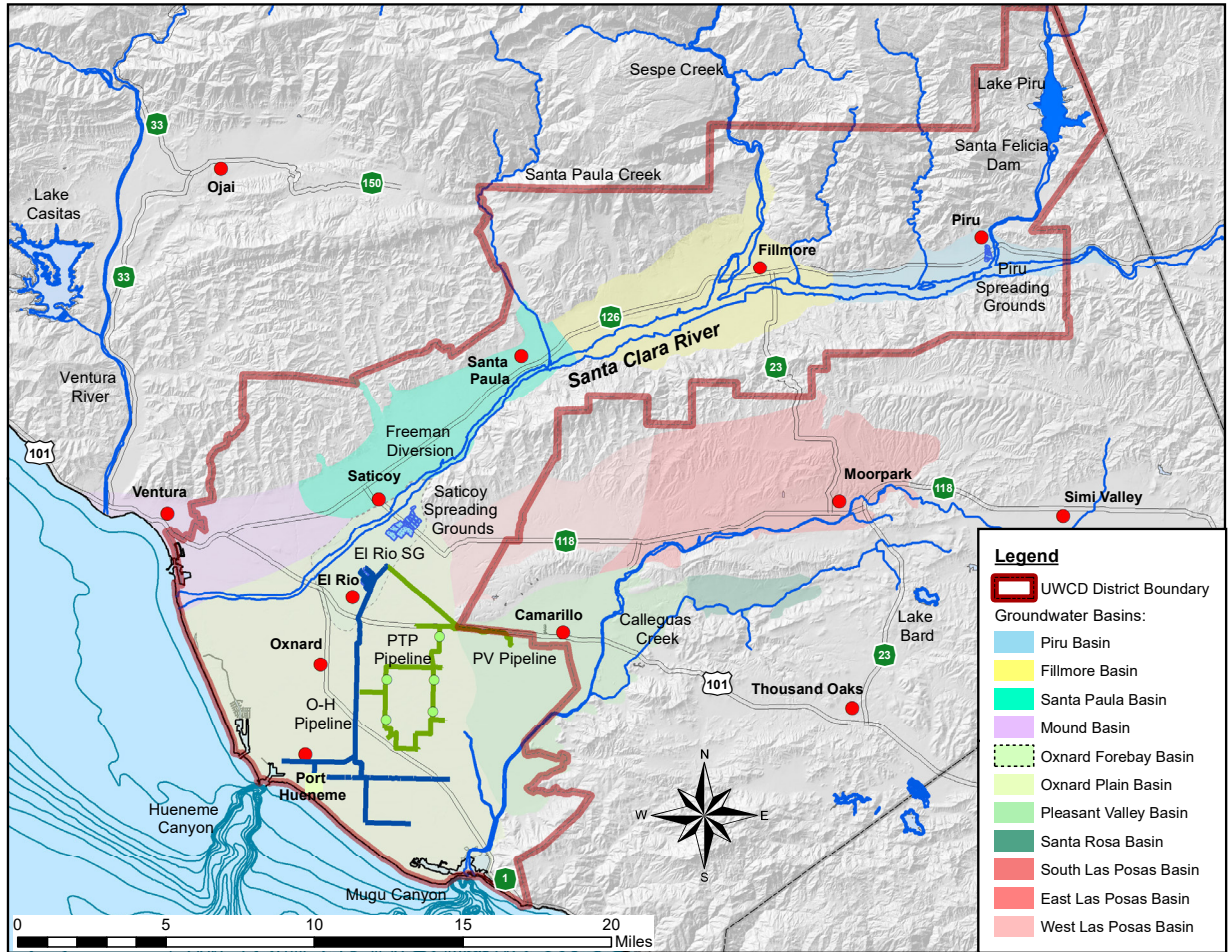
Headquartered in Santa Paula, United encompasses 214,000 acres of the Santa Clara River Valley and the Oxnard Plain. District facilities include the Lake Piru Recreation area; Santa Felicia Dam and Hydroelectric Facility; spreading grounds in Saticoy, El Rio and Piru; the Freeman Diversion Facility; the Oxnard Hueneme Pipeline System; and an agricultural water delivery system.

United provides potable water to the City of Oxnard, the Port Hueneme Water Agency, which includes Naval Base Ventura County, and several small mutual water companies. United also provides surface water to growers on the Oxnard Plain, to offset groundwater pumping in that area.

Funding

The United Water Conservation District is funded primarily through groundwater pumping charges, property taxes, and water delivery charges. With development, as well as maintenance and operational expenses, United manages an annual budget of about \$40 million. Cooperative programs with other agencies help maximize the use of District resources and promote mutually beneficial projects. United is an active participant in the community it serves and has a strong commitment to county, state and national water issues.

United Water Conservation District Boundary



Facilities and Strategies

The United Water Conservation District (United) works to maximize the water resources of the Santa Clara Valley and Oxnard Plain, utilizing the surface flow of the Santa Clara

River and its tributaries for replenishment of groundwater. Enough water to supply the City of Oxnard for the next 100 years (more than 3 million acre-feet) has been reintroduced to the aquifers via this system. Many strategies and facilities have been developed over the years to provide for local demand while trying to reverse groundwater overdraft and seawater intrusion into coastal aquifers, and to balance this demand with increased need to provide water for environmental purposes.

UNITED'S FACILITIES INCLUDE:

- The Santa Felicia Dam, constructed in 1955, was the first dam built to solely recharge groundwater.
- The Freeman Diversion, constructed in 1991, replenishes approximately 58,000 acre-feet of stream flow to the underground water supply each year. A fish ladder was built into the Diversion to allow for the annual migration of steelhead trout.
- Lake Piru Recreation Area was created by the dam and holds approximately 82,000 acre-feet of winter run-off while providing year-round camping, boating, fishing and other outdoor recreational opportunities to visitors.
- The Piru, Saticoy, El Rio and Noble Spreading Grounds (also known as artificial recharge basins) facilitate a natural percolation process, allowing water from the Freeman Diversion Facility to seep through layers of sand and gravel in an area known as the Oxnard Forebay to replenish the underground supply.
- The Pumping Trough Pipeline and the Pleasant Valley Pipeline and Reservoirs deliver surface water directly from the Santa Clara River to agriculture on the Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley to reduce pumping in the overdrafted lower aquifer system.
- The Oxnard Hueneme Pipeline delivers treated groundwater for potable use to the City of Oxnard, Port Hueneme Water Agency and several small mutual water companies, which reduces saltwater intrusion caused by coastal pumping.



SANTA FELICIA DAM AND SPILLWAY





CURRENT TRENDS, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The United Water Conservation District (the District) needs to both respond to and anticipate important trends, issues and opportunities in water supply and delivery for its customers. As it enters its tenth decade of operation in the Santa Clara River Valley of Ventura County, the District faces the ongoing challenges of:

- maintaining and upgrading basic infrastructure;
- accommodating the urgent and multi-faceted impacts of climate change;
- incorporating evolving applications of science, engineering and technology around agricultural resource management and desalination;
- addressing complex plant, animal and riparian habitat sensitivities within the Valley;
- all while meeting customer expectations for reliability, sustainability and adaptability in water supply and delivery.

II: Environmental Scan

With a significant portfolio of assets, United must invest in maintaining, refurbishing and in some cases replacing its infrastructure of dams, weirs and pipelines. Major policy initiatives, such as the Habitat Conservation Plan and the State Water Project have brought important agreements to bear on the District's operations, with the latter requiring an updated allocation framework that will impact United's ability to meet the demands of a growing population. These initiatives demonstrate United's active participation in regional and statewide partnerships to protect and enhance the watershed resources. Advances in groundwater modeling and renewable energy production, along with exploration of recycled water and desalination projects, are positioning the District for the future.

Ongoing communication with customers is essential to promoting the conservation and efficiency goals of the District. Drought awareness is an ongoing issue to have in front of ratepayers and water users. And education about the proper use of the recreation areas will help protect those resources.

The District has opportunities in the coming years to advance water supply and reliability, while exercising leadership in the region to solve issues, promote conservation and protect vital environmental resources.



SEDIMENT REMOVAL AT DESILTING BASINS



VISITOR ENJOYING LAKE PIRU

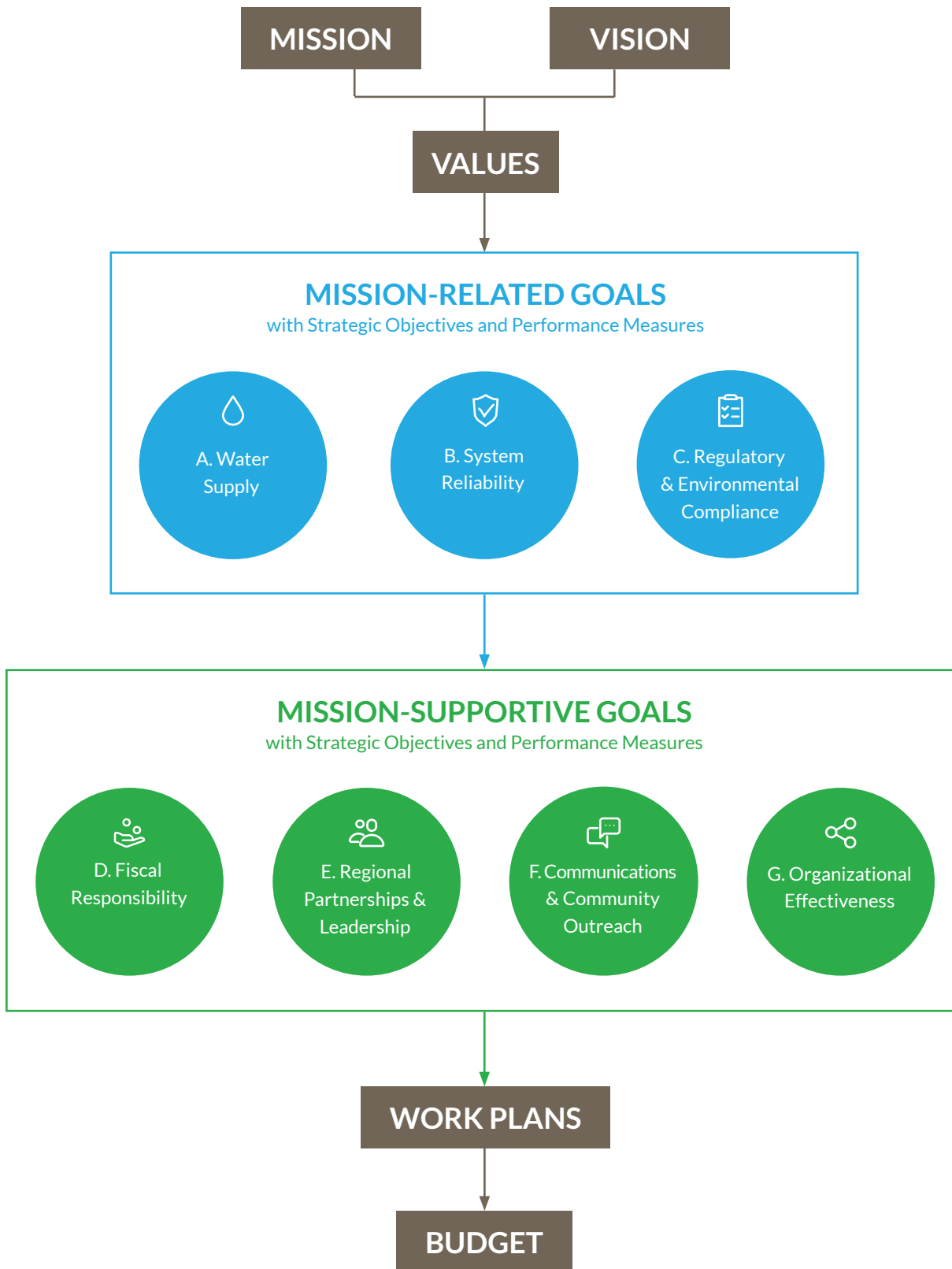




STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the District’s mission and vision statements, its organizational values, along with the three mission-related goal areas, the four mission-supportive goal areas, and the strategic objectives under each that will guide its work over the next three to five years. Each goal area also includes performance measures that the District has developed to help chart the success of its operations, resource and asset management, and evolution as an organization.

Strategic Plan Framework



Mission, Vision, Values

MISSION

The mission statement articulates the purpose of the District, its reason for being:

United Water Conservation District manages, protects, conserves and enhances the water resources of the District and produces a reliable and sustainable supply of groundwater for the reasonable, beneficial use of all users.

VISION

The vision statement describes the aspirations of the District, how the world looks if it is successful at its mission:

Customers and users of the District enjoy a reliable, high-quality, sustainable supply of water, thanks to sound resource management, compliance with environmental regulations, and strong partnerships within the water policy field.

VALUES

These are the organizational values that guide the work of the District:

- *Transparency*
- *Science-based decision-making*
- *Collaboration*
- *Integrity*
- *Mission-driven focus*
- *Operational efficiency*



Mission-Related Goals and Objectives

There are three goal areas that relate to the core of United Water Conservation District’s mission: water supply, water system reliability and regulatory and environmental compliance. Each of these has a number of strategic objectives that direct the organization to attain these goals. Performance measures are identified as a means of assessing progress in each goal area.



A. WATER SUPPLY

Goal Statement: Ensure long-term water supply for all users.

Strategic Objectives (in no priority order):

- A1. Identify and optimize use of all potential water supplies in our “toolbox” including recycled water, high-sediment river water, supplemental State Water Project (SWP) water, urban storm water runoff, treated brackish groundwater, etc.
- A2. Maximize and expand State Water Project water delivery.
- A3. Prepare an Integrated Water Resources Management Plan that prioritizes all water supply alternatives.
- A4. Work collaboratively with groundwater sustainability agencies and support implementation of their water plans.

Performance Measure(s):

- Provision of adequate water supply to support the needs of all District users in accordance with the prevailing Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

- Increased State Water Project deliveries
- Identification and prioritization of new supply options
- Maintained or increased sustainable yield
- Participation and leadership in implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act



B. SYSTEM RELIABILITY

Goal Statement: Ensure that the District’s existing and planned water supply, conveyance, and recharge systems meet regional needs, including emergency response.

Strategic Objectives (in no priority order):

- B1. Maintain effectiveness of existing infrastructure.
- B2. Develop and implement new infrastructure projects that maintain and improve water supply.
- B3. Implement an asset management policy and develop an asset management plan.
- B4. Develop strategies that leverage existing and new infrastructure to improve flexibility and reliability.

Performance Measure(s):

- Achievement of target system reliability to meet current and future demands
- Increased conjunctive use opportunities
- Progress in implementation of asset management plan



C. REGULATORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Goal Statement: Ensure long-term sustainability of all water sources within the District while complying with all regulations.

Strategic Objectives (in no priority order):

- C1. Resolve outstanding legal disputes and prevent future legal disputes in an operationally and financially sustainable fashion.
- C2. Work collaboratively with environmental resource agencies to obtain agreement on outstanding permitting requirements.
- C3. Work collaboratively with local, state, and federal elected officials to streamline and modernize the application process for permits.

C4. Promote and provide leadership in securing reasonable and science-based decisions on environmental regulations.

C5. Comply with state and federal drinking water quality standards.

C6. Evaluate all projects from an economic, social and environmental perspective.

C7. Incorporate environmental best practices in all District projects where feasible.

Performance Measure(s):

- Compliance with all applicable laws, statutes and regulations
- Securing of operational and construction permits for district activities
- Completion of required Department of Drinking Water monitoring, sampling and analysis



LAKE PIRU

Mission-Supported Goals and Objectives

There are four goal areas that serve to support the mission of the District through operational and collaborative endeavors. These are: fiscal responsibility, regional partnerships and leadership, communications and community outreach, and organizational effectiveness. For each goal area the District has established a set of strategic objectives that direct the organization to attain these goals. Performance measures are identified as a means of assessing progress in each goal area.



D. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Goal Statement: Protect current and future value of District resources in a transparent, timely and accurate fashion while adhering to all applicable legal, ethical and government accounting standards.

Strategic Objectives (in no priority order):

- D1. Create a robust, long-range Financial Strategic Plan that illustrates a path to financial sustainability.
- D2. Increase financial resources available to fund District initiatives through improvement of debt capacity, expansion of grant awards and partnerships with adjacent government authorities; optimize all available mechanisms for raising revenue, including limited-term taxes, development fees and facility use fees (at Lake Piru).

- D3. Improve the visibility of District finances to the public, the Board of Directors and District management through accurate, timely and relevant reporting.
- D4. Assure appropriate use of financial resources through sound, fact-based analysis and appropriate monitoring and reporting of District expenditures.
- D5. Maintain financial controls, regular reviews and documentation to ensure compliance with government accounting standards.

Performance Measures:

- Maintenance of fund reserve levels
- Diversity of financing sources
- Increase in number and value of grants awarded
- Favorable findings from audit reports
- Continued accuracy and relevance of financial reporting



E. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS & LEADERSHIP

Goal Statement: Work collaboratively with local jurisdictions, agencies, and stakeholders to provide cost-effective water-supply solutions.

Strategic Objectives (in no priority order):

E1. Build and strengthen partnerships and coalitions with all stakeholders (e.g., GMAs, cities, water agencies, Ventura County, GSAs, neighbor groups, Non-Governmental Organizations, Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Quality Control Board, United States Department of Fish & Wildlife, agriculture community, business community).

E2. Maintain advocacy efforts at federal, state and local levels.

E3. Strengthen partnerships with other water agencies and municipalities to fund future Article 21 water and capital projects of regional significance.

E4. Develop cooperative agreements with local and regional agencies for projects that provide regional benefits.

Performance Measure(s):

- Engagement of all identified key partners
- Creation of cooperative agreements
- Secure state and federal funding
- Level of active participation in organizations by District's Director and staff



HYDROLOGICAL SURVEY ON SANTA CLARA RIVER



F. COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Goal Statement: Promote awareness and understanding of the District’s mission, programs and priority projects to raise the District profile and credibility with customers and constituencies.

Strategic Objectives (in no priority order):

- F1. Continue efforts to educate stakeholders, taxpayers, and elected officials on the true cost of water and our role as UWCD to ensure water reliability.
- F2. Promote technical expertise of United staff as value to stakeholders.
- F3. Maintain and distribute cohesive messaging on District issues at all levels of representation (i.e., staff, Board, consultants) and across all mediums.
- F4. Build support for infrastructure replacement and a future bond measure.
- F5. Create new drought awareness to support a more robust water supply.
- F6. Promote recreational use of the reservoir.
- F7. Seek and work collaboratively with groups of shared interest to enhance regional collaboration.

Performance Measure(s):

- Increased community presence via technological channels.
- High positive regard (as measured by a statistically-valid survey).



G. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Goal Statement: Increase UWCD’s organizational capacity to meet current and future challenges.

Strategic Objectives (in no priority order):

- G1. Improve administrative efficiencies.
- G2. Build staff capacity.
- G3. Hire and retain the best, most efficacious and competent staff.
- G4. Develop recruitment plans for key and strategic positions.
- G5. Continue efforts to make Board meetings more efficient.
- G6. Advance workforce excellence and capability: Leverage technology, management and innovation to implement a culture of continuous improvement.
- G7. Establish and implement an energy efficiency program targeting continual improvement.

Performance Measure(s):

- Cost of water delivery
- Cost of electricity used per acre foot of water delivered
- Annual employee turnover rate
- Number of staff certifications and professional registrations
- Update of District’s Policy and Procedures Manuals

The District’s Work Plan will be developed by staff that translates each strategic objective into specific activities that will be carried out to meet each objective.



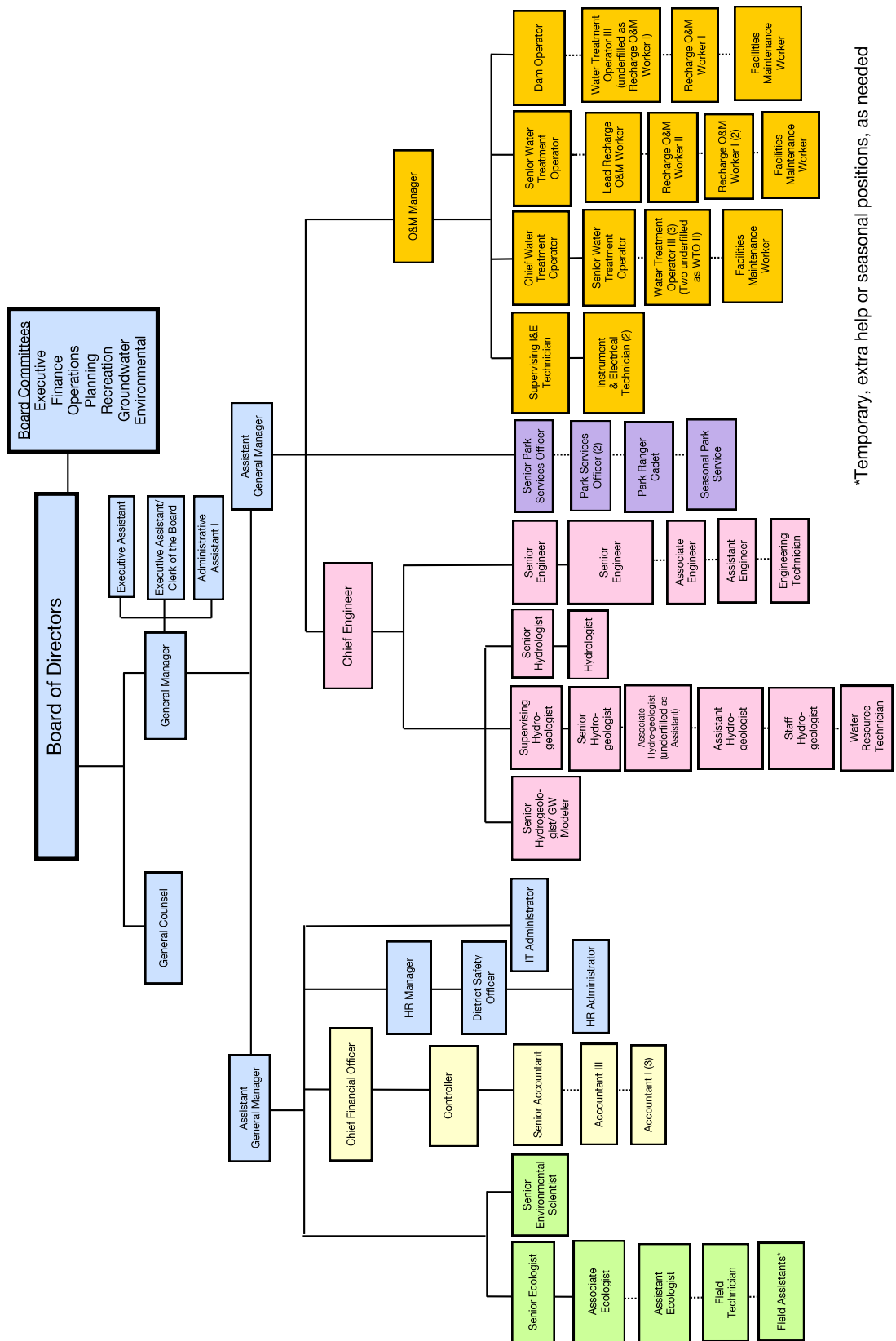
EDUCATING FUTURE LEADERS ABOUT WATERSHED ISSUES



AERIAL OF FREEMAN
DIVERSION

APPENDIX

UWCD Organizational Structure



*Temporary, extra help or seasonal positions, as needed

