

DATE: July 23, 2015

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: WCA Staff

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 6: Liaison and Activities Report

Greater Los Angeles County Regional Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Planning: With the announcement last spring of Proposition 84 IRWM Implementation Grant funds from the California Department of Water Resources the Greater Los Angeles County Leadership Committee in conjunction with the Gateway IRWMP group selected the final set of projects to receive consulting services for technical review. Project submittal to DWR is in the fall.

San Gabriel River Discovery Center Authority: The SGRDCA Design Team held a project kick-off meeting on July 2 and has started work on completing the Construction Documents. Park and Recreation and WCA PM will meet in early August to review the permit process and the in progress plan updates. A permit plan check process will be established. THA executed the professional services contract with Discovery Center Authority Target Permit submittal set to be ready for first submittal to agencies in September.

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument: The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Community Collaborative continues to meet monthly to provide recommendation to the U.S. Forest Service for development of a interim national monument forest plan. The group is supporting the Forest Service with comments on the Need to Change assessment under development. There are four Need to Change Committee working groups to provide comment on Transportation, Land Use, Minerals, and Recreation. Board member Margaret Clark Mayor of Rosemead is Co-Chair of the Land Use Committee.

Following the October 10, 2014 Presidential Proclamation establishing the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, two separate planning processes have been initiated. The first is the preparation of an amendment to the Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan, referred to as the Monument Management Plan. When complete, the resulting planning document will guide management of monument resources for the next 10 to 15 years. The process to develop that plan includes public input as mandated by the 2012 U.S. Forest Service Planning Rule, which requires transparent, thoughtful and frank deliberation and engagement of diverse perspectives and interest. In formally initiating this planning process, the Angeles National Forest as announced a first series of public meeting that will be held on June 22-June 26, 2015. These meetings will provide the public, agencies, and other groups an opportunity to learn about the Monument, talk directly with Forest Service staff, and provide input into the Management Plan. The second planning activity involves the establishment of a San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Community Collaborative. An emerging purpose for this Community Collaborative is to represent diverse stakeholder perspectives in identifying, prioritizing, and advocating for investments, management objectives, and values that sustainably benefit the Angeles National Forest, the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, and all the communities throughout the region.

San Gabriel National Recreation Area: Staff will continue to monitor/track (Chu): San Gabriel National Recreation Area Act. The bill was introduced to Congress and referred to the House Natural Resources Committee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation on June 12, 2014. WCA is not currently aware of any public meeting or activities related to this topic.

Watershed Conservation Authority Website: WCA staff has been working on the development and launch of a new website. The updated interface is both more visual and has more content. The layout is designed to be easier to navigate, and users will be able to sign up for easy communication and news updates. When the site is ready to go public the old site will be retired and the new one will be at our online home: wca.ca.gov

Until the public launch the new website can be found at: wca.nationbuilder.com

SPECIAL EVENTS

Lower Los Angeles River Community Workshop: In Early to Mid-August (date TBD) from 6-8 pm the WCA will be co-hosting an outreach event for the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan with the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation at Rancho Los Cerritos in Long Beach. The WCA will be kicking off public discussion about the Gateway Urban Greening Master Plan, with the Luskin Center opening outreach about their own River Resources Toolkit: an initiative to inventory case studies of successful projects on the Los Angeles River. This will be an opportunity to share information and resources with other community based organizations active in the area, and to engage with and hear from the public about relevant issues and interests. Light dinner will be provided by UCLA Luskin Center with funding from The California Endowment.

Lower Los Angeles River: From Gray to Green Share Your Voice | Community Workshop

-  Learn about exciting new opportunities and resources to create community spaces along the Los Angeles River in your community
-  Identify key opportunity areas where river improvements are most needed
-  Engage in discussions that will inform plans and resources to advance river improvement projects
-  Light dinner provided; Registration link coming soon.



WCA PROJECTS

Azusa River Wilderness Park Project: River Wilderness Park (RWP) is an approx. 75.7 acre property which is slated to provide unique wilderness experiences in the lower San Gabriel River Canyon: engaging landscapes, gathering spaces, thriving habitats, and a regional hub and welcome center for the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

Based on the 2012 adopted RWP Master Plan, staff is currently reviewing the design development of the RWP Entry Improvements. Key benefits of the RWP Entry Project include conserving and enhancing open space, preserving ecologically significant land for the public, encouraging outdoor activity, and providing facilities to cultivate awareness, appreciation, and stewardship of our natural resources. A proposed open-air pavilion and interactive nature play area embody these benefits as central parts of the plan to draw people into the park, providing enriching spaces to experience, and to engage the public in exploration.

Design consultants working on the design development of the RWP Entry Improvements are in the process of preparing 90% construction documents. Throughout this design process staff and the design team are continuing to coordinate with permitting and regulatory agencies that have purview over the project, including Caltrans and the City of Azusa. Updated CEQA analysis and documentation is also underway that will incorporate the proposed improvements on the Canyon Inn Property that have not been previously reviewed under the existing RWP Mitigated Negative Deceleration.

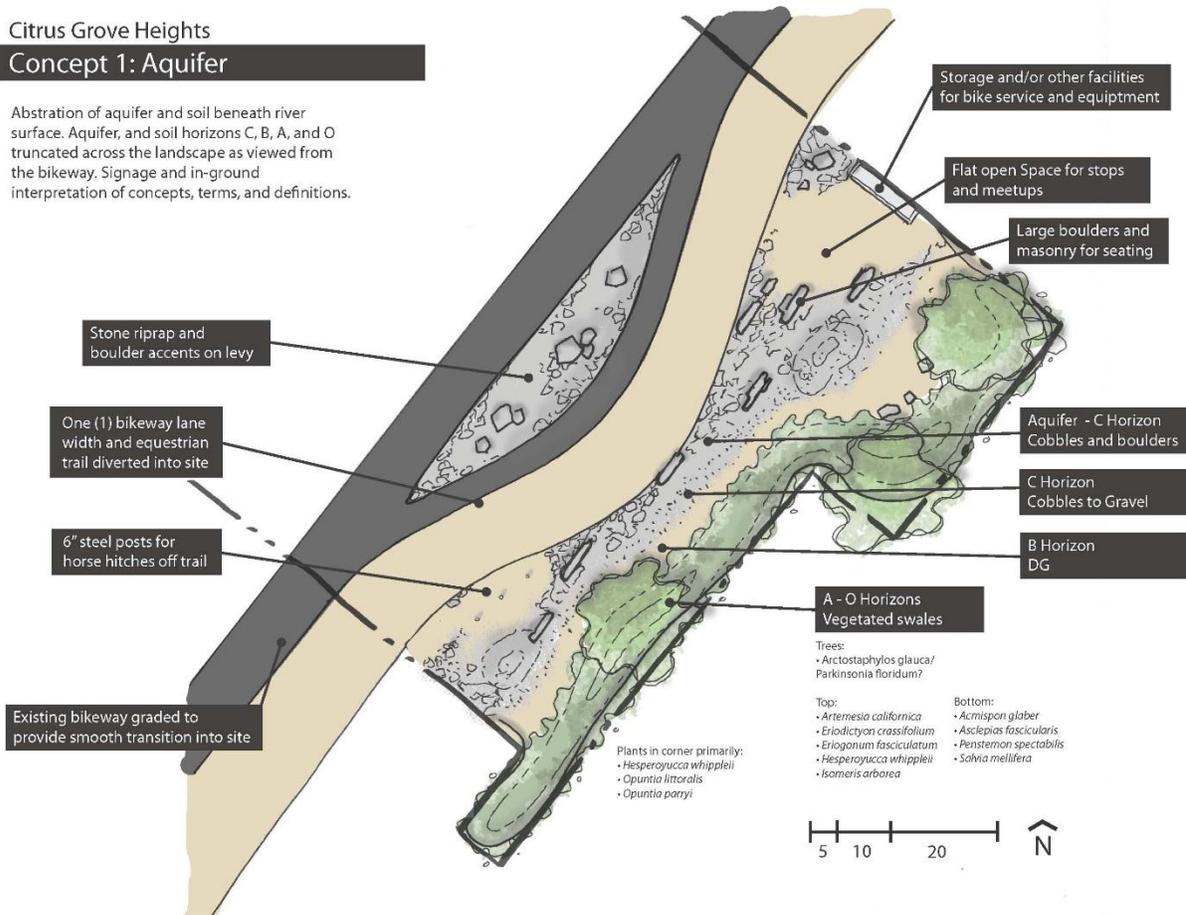
To fund these proposed improvements, staff has also prepared and submitted two grant proposals. These include an application to the 2015 Californian Active Transportation Program for the San Gabriel River Bike Trail Gap Closure, Roundabout, and Park Entry Improvements Project to fund the construction of 1,750 feet of Class I bike trail and a safe crossing and roundabout on State Route 39, closing the gap between the River Wilderness Park and the San Gabriel River Bikeway. Details of this grant application submittal are further discussed under a separate agency item. Additionally, another grant application was submitted to the Proposition A Countywide Competitive Grant Program to fund the interactive nature play area and pavilion.

Citrus Grove Heights Bike Stop: A concept plan for this pocket park on the San Gabriel River Trail has received preliminary approval from stakeholders. The next steps require additional survey work and a grading plan. The Flood Control District is currently reviewing their capacity to assist with these engineering tasks under the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) agreement. Feedback and preliminary approvals have supported bikeway access into the site, prefabricated shade structure, on-site storage, hitching posts, a bike service station, interpretive site elements, and landscaping.

Key stakeholders include the City of Pico Rivera, City of Whittier (due to adjacent water conveying infrastructure), Los Angeles County Flood Control District, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bike Coordinators, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation Planning Division, BikeSGV, and Equestrian Joint Council.

Citrus Grove Heights
Concept 1: Aquifer

Abstraction of aquifer and soil beneath river surface. Aquifer, and soil horizons C, B, A, and O truncated across the landscape as viewed from the bikeway. Signage and in-ground interpretation of concepts, terms, and definitions.



Coyote Creek Park Grand Opening

Parks Make Life Better!

The City of Los Alamitos City Council cordially invites you and your family to join us at the Grand Opening of Coyote Creek Park as we celebrate "Parks Make Life Better" month

Tuesday, July 21st
4:30 p.m.

The Coyote Creek Park project focus was to create a passive recreation area with landscaping composed of native plants of significant ecological value to the region to attract habitat and restore the site into a passive greenway park along the Coyote Creek Channel.

www.cityoflosalamitos.org
(562) 430-1073

Parks Make Life Better!

Coyote Creek Park – City of Los Alamitos: The City will have held their Grand Opening Celebration of Coyote Creek Park in the City of Los Alamitos just days before our board meeting. WCA staff will be in attendance and a member of the RMC will be asked to speak at the event in recognition of the funding granted to the City of Los Alamitos to complete this improvement at the Confluence of Coyote Creek and San Gabriel River.

The park boasts a walking trail, native landscape, seating area, interpretive graphics and decorative ironwork sculpted gate to the River trail. WCA staff assisted City staff to Sheppard the project through the design, permitting phases and aided in the construction oversight of the contractor and later plant establishment.

Duck Farm Project: AECOM has finalized the updated plan sets and they are currently being packaged and prepared for resubmittal to each agency for review, approval and issuance of permits or consent as applicable. Staff will work with first District representative and Watershed Division in the resubmittal of updated plans to County departments. Upon receipt of agency approvals, a construction set will be issued and a Request for Bids package assembled and bid notice will be posted.

A park host/caretaker has been hired and is currently residing on site in their personal RV to provide enhanced security and to conduct routine maintenance and ground keeping activities on the property. This is a part-time, project hire employee.

Emerald Necklace: The WCA is managing the Emerald Necklace Feasibility Study and Implementation Planning Project with the purpose of identifying trail connection and urban greening projects throughout the 17-mile network. This work is being conducted in collaboration with members of the Emerald Necklace Coordination Committee, which includes staff from the RMC, Amigos de los Rios, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, Los Angeles Flood Control District, and County of Los Angeles First Supervisorial District. A project update and overview presentation will be provided under a separate agenda item.

Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan: With a grant from the Strategic Growth Council and partner collaboration the WCA is developing a visionary green infrastructure plan for the Gateway Cities Region. The goal of the project is to provide a planning document and tools to allow cities and the region to move projects forward and be successful in attaining funding from a variety of sources to improve health and the environment through green infrastructure, parks, trails, greenways and river linkages within the Gateway Cities and along the lower Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers.

Working within an evolving framework the project team is reviewing local and regional plans, collecting relevant data, and conducting preliminary analyses to inventory existing conditions. Additionally, WCA staff is reviewing options to host the final plan online in a digital format for greater public dissemination. Tuesday August 4th the WCA in collaboration with UCLA's Luskin Center is holding a joint community outreach workshop to introduce the Urban Greening Master Plan Project and begin to collect community input. This collaboration is part of a larger effort to work with other NGO's and interested parties working in the Gateway Cities and adjacent region on the sharing of open source data supporting the establishment of a region-wide planning tool that is consistent with the larger watershed and greater LA region.

San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Project: The Cattle Canyon Project seeks to address unsustainable recreation practices, which includes habitat disturbance and increased risk to human health from water contact recreation. Other goals of the project seek to improve safety, and to enhance the visitor experience and quality of recreational amenities provided along the river.

The current Phase 1 of Cattle Canyon Project includes both a planning study and an outreach program focused on the prevention of specific harmful recreational behaviors through an information campaign meant to build awareness among site users. The planning study, includes a comprehensive site assessment and conceptual planning process that has identified opportunities for physical improvements, as well as to a lesser extent, management considerations that will improve site conditions.

On June 12th the planning and design consultants, BlueGreen Consulting, presented three schematic design options layouts that depict a range of feasible opportunities to address sustainable recreation at the project site. Based on comments from the advisory committee, as well as target stakeholder outreach, the concepts

presented within these alternatives will be refined into a preferred conceptual site development plan and final concept planning report.

South Gate Habitat Restoration Project/Parque dos Rios: North East Trees, as the architect of record, is in the process of completing updates to the permit package addressing comments received from City and easement holders. Once plan update has been completed a meeting with City staff will be coordinated to review the permit plan set and seek to expedite review process. Once plan check review is completed staff will, with coordination from Willdan CM, begin the construction bid process.

LACFCD has evaluated options for a WCA project water line connection and has determined that a new meter from the City of South Gate would be required but could potentially tap into LA County water line on North side of Imperial Hwy. If approved by City of South Gate, for which a meeting of both City and Water Department is in the works, would save the project substantial funds in not having to install a new water line across Imperial Highway.

Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space: Acquired in 2008, the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space Property is a total of approx. 60.8 acres. It is located directly east of Bonelli Regional Park and along the Walnut Creek riparian corridor. Approximately 6.7 acres are owned by the City of San Dimas and 54 acres are owned by the WCA. The City's portion is directly adjacent to the Loma Vista Park, creating a continuous property that will enlarge the park and open it up to the natural open space area.

After completing a conceptual development plan for the site in coordination with the City of San Dimas, the City secured Prop A funding begin phase 1 development including trail development and public access. The City and WCA are continuing to collaborate through the CEQA review and documentation process, in which the WCA is acting as the lead agency.

A Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Deceleration document has been prepared that addresses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the project. This environmental documentation and supporting analysis were subject to a public review period from May 12th to June 10th. During this review, agency and public comments relative to environmental issues were collected and will be part of the recorded document. Consideration of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration by the San Dimas City Council, was heard and due to public concern no action was taken. The WCA, as lead agency, will continue to work with the City and Community and staff has chosen to delay bringing this item before the WCA board at this time.