

DATE: July 16, 2020

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: WCA Staff

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 07: Liaison and Activities Report

Legislative Update

The legislative update will be given at the board meeting.

PROJECTS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument: At the May meeting of the San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative, Jerry Perez, Forest Supervisor of the Angeles National Forest (ANF), gave an update on the ANF's response to COVID-19. Recreation areas across the Angeles National Forest have been experiencing exceptionally high numbers of visitors. The ANF continues to operate with limited maintenance capacity due to the COVID-19 crisis. Visitors are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings, practice social distancing, and pack out their trash.

On June 13, the Angeles National Forest began temporary closing the Chantry Flat Recreation Area on weekends due to heightened public safety concerns. Weekday access, Monday through Friday, remains open.



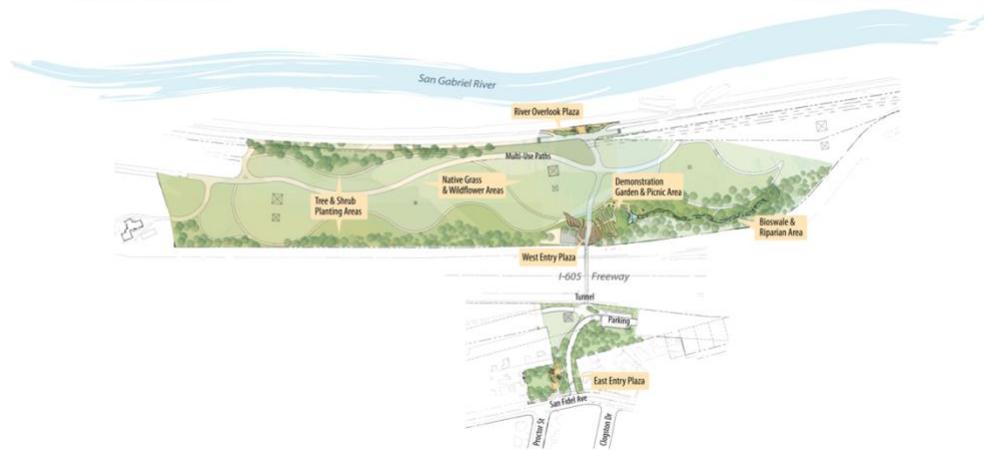
San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative: On May 28, 2020, the SGMCC held a virtual meeting via Zoom. All Ad Hoc committees gave updates and presentations. The Angeles National Forest gave an update on USFS's response to COVID-19. The Collaborative discussed the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills

and Rivers Protection Act. David Peebles, manager of the ANF Heritage and Tribal Relations Program presented on cultural resources in the ANF. The next meeting will be held on July 23, 2020.

The SGMCC has a Steering Committee and four topical ad-hoc Committees working to enhance National Monument management and accessibility for local communities in four areas: Trails and Recreation, Transportation, Volunteer Engagement, and Conservation Education. Meetings occur every other month.

WCA PROJECTS & PROPERTIES

Duck Farm Project: Construction work primarily in the area of landscaping and soil preparation for planting was restarted in June and continues through July. Submittals are being processed by the project team and construction team meetings will resume later this month. WCA's Construction Manager is finalizing an update to the project completion schedule with the General Contractor, Fast-Track Construction anticipated to be this Fall. The specimen Coast Live Oak Tree in the neighborhood entry park was planted and the steel for the shade structures await their wood beams (see photos below). Community engagement and outreach related to the park's name has been completed. The presentation of results will be made reported on today as part of the July Board meeting.



illustrative site plan for the Duck Farm River Park currently under construction.

The Phase 1A Duck Farm project involves the development of a 30+ acre river adjacent park project that includes a neighborhood park entry, public access trails, riparian landscape, a native plant demonstration garden, native and low water meadows, a river overlook and interpretation features.

Duck Farm House Landscape and Water Project: In April, the WCA Board approved a grant award from the RMC approximately \$2 million to complete the San Gabriel River Center. Staff will apply for an upcoming County Measure A grant program anticipated to be released in early Fall to fill the current funding gap, and in the meantime the project will be designed relative to the funds on hand.

WCA is also moving forward with its application for Supplementary Environmental Funds in conjunction with the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. The SEP would augment the Duck Farm House Landscape and Water Project and include additional public amenities and an expanded parking lot. The Work Plan is currently being reviewed by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.



Duck Farm House Landscape and Water Project will include the construction of practical landscape-oriented water capture and conservation strategies that average homeowners can achieve in their own landscapes.

San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network: The San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network Strategic Implementation Plan is a multi-objective effort to transform existing Los Angeles County Flood Control District right of way in the San Gabriel Valley into a world-class Greenway Network in conjunction with identifying ways to upgrade and enhance the District's existing flood control facilities. The Plan will build upon the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments' (SGVCOG) ongoing Active Transportation Planning Initiative and will highlight connectivity with other planned active transportation components and green urban infrastructure projects throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

The Plan will accelerate development of greenway design standards and create cooperative agreements with other agencies to expedite project delivery for shovel ready projects. This approach will enable simultaneous implementation of high priority greenway projects while ensuring consistency with the broader master planning of the Greenway Network.

Emerald Necklace: The next meeting of the Emerald Necklace Committee is scheduled for July 14, after the publishing of this report. An update of which will be provided in the September report. This meeting

brings together County and WCA staff to more closely collaborate to move projects forward. Priority projects continue to focus on the San Jose Creek Bridge and River Trail extension to the Duck Farm and the Rosemead Blvd complete street project between Legg Lake and Durfee within the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area. This working group will continue to meet in an effort to identify funding, prepare grant applications and seek to partner to develop projects identified in the Emerald Necklace Plan.

EMERALD NECKLACE FEASIBILITY STUDY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - PHASE I

The Emerald Necklace is an extraordinary 17-mile loop of bicycle and multi-use trails which links parks and open spaces along two waterways, the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo. Phase I's 16 projects will close gaps in this regional recreational trails network and increase access to hundreds of thousands of constituents. Ongoing efforts will also add gateways, signage and greening. Further phases identified in the feasibility study will continue to expand the system in following years, contingent on funding and public support.

Westside Multi-Use Trail: A Trail for All User Groups

The purpose of the trail is to create a continuous loop around the Emerald Necklace. The trail will connect the Westside Multi-Use Trail to the Emerald Necklace and provide a safe and scenic route for all user groups.

- 12 Adult Use Trail: Alhambra Wash from State Highway 60 to the Gateway Community Center with Gates, Signage, etc.
- 13 Underpasses at Rosemead Blvd.
- 14 Street Access Ramps at Rosemead Blvd. with Gates & Signage
- 15 10 Footing Underpass Improvements
- 16 Adult Use Trail: Rosemead Blvd. to Valley Blvd.

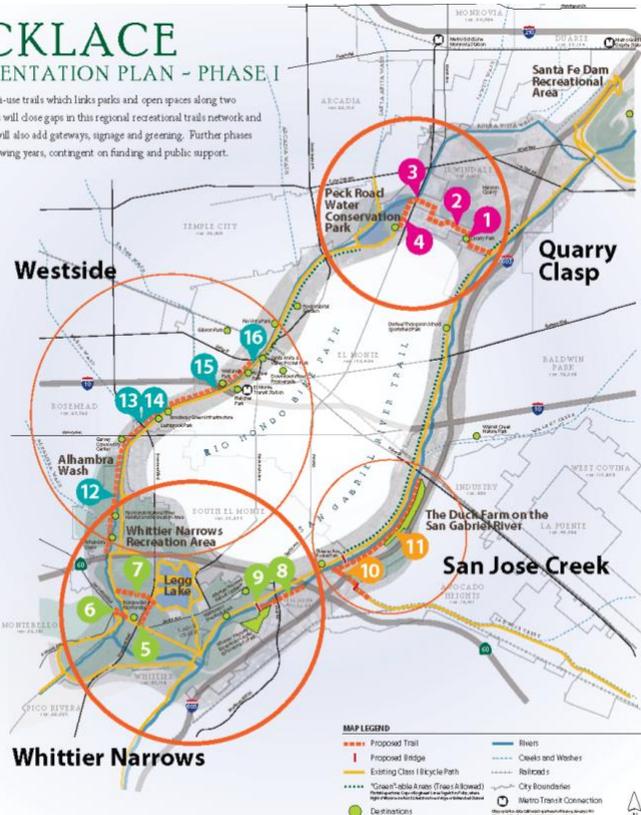
Whittier Narrows Connectivity: Linking Existing Park Resources

This section returns to the section of the trail which connects existing parks and open spaces. The trail will provide a safe and scenic route for all user groups.

- 5 Class I Bicycle Path: Adjacent to Rosemead Blvd. to Legg Lake
- 6 Class I Bicycle Path: From Rosemead Blvd. to Lincoln Ave. on San Gabriel Blvd. with Enhanced Signalized Crossing, Signage & Wayfinding
- 7 Class I Bicycle Path: From the Rio Hondo to Legg Lake through the Southern California Edison Enchantment
- 8 Adult Use Trail: Bullhoser Village from State Highway 60 to Horseman's Park
- 9 Adult Use Bridge: Bullhoser Bridge at Horseman's Park

PROJECT COMPONENTS

- Greening
- Equine Trail
- Multi-Use Trail
- Foot/Bike/Horse Crossing
- Smart Bridge
- Underpass
- Bridge
- Tunnel



Quarry Clasp: Completing the Loop

With the Trailway project on Peck Road, Westside Multi-Use Trail, and the Class I Bike Path, the trail will connect the Westside Multi-Use Trail to the Emerald Necklace.

- 1 Park Development with Trail, Gates, Signage and Amenities
- 2 Multi-Use Trail and Bike Paths
- 3 Signalized Crossing at Peck Road with Signage and Wayfinding
- 4 Rio Hondo Adult Use Trail and Class I Bicycle Path: Connection in Peck Road Water Conservation Park

San Jose Creek Regional Access: Connecting Communities East of the San Gabriel River

Trail will provide a safe and scenic route for all user groups.

- 10 Multi-Use Trail and 2 Health Use Bridges: From San Jose Creek Trail to San Gabriel River Trail
- 11 Multi-Use Trail: From San Jose Creek to the Duck Farm on the San Gabriel River

EMERALD NECKLACE TRAILING COMMITTEE

PLANNING CONSULTANTS:

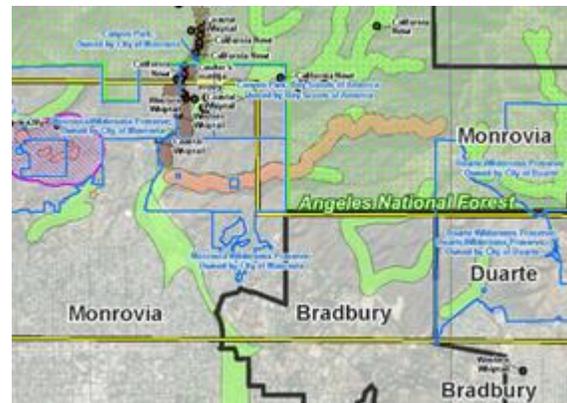
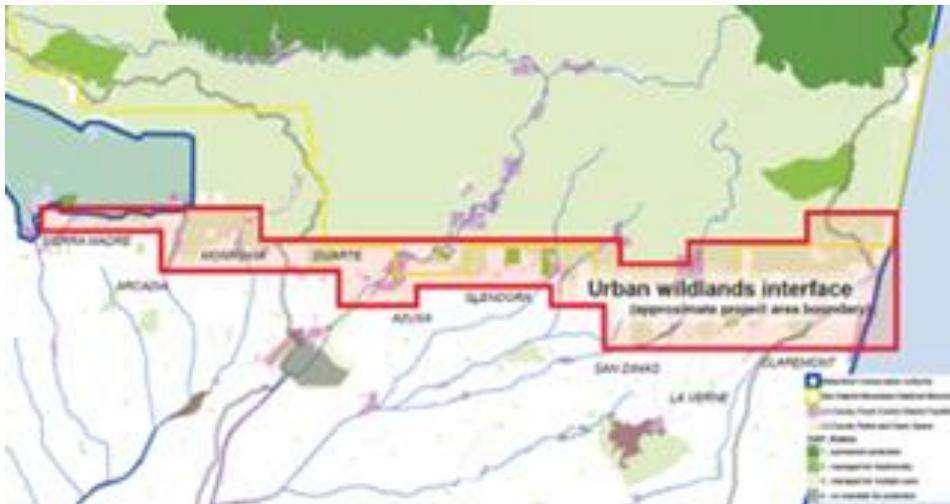
APRIL 2016

The Emerald Necklace is a 17-mile interconnected network of existing and envisioned bikeways, multi-use trails, parks, and greenways along the Rio Hondo and the San Gabriel River. Along the Rio Hondo the Emerald Necklace stretches from Peck Road Water Conservation Park in the north to the Whittier Narrows Recreation Areas in the south. Along the San Gabriel River, it stretches from Hanson Quarry in the north to Whittier Narrows Recreational Area in the south.

The Emerald Necklace Implementation Plan – Phase 1 (Proposed Project) includes 15 related projects that would close gaps in a regional recreational trails network and increase access to the trails to hundreds of thousands of people in the project area.

San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan: Psomas continues work on the Report on Regional Biological Opportunities. A presentation of work in progress was made to the RMC board. The presentation will also be shared with key stakeholders.

An RFP will be issued to engage additional consultants in stakeholder feedback to complete the Human Factors research, and to compile the completed Plan.



San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan Project will develop a comprehensive prioritized acquisition strategy and a recommended resource management and operations strategy to preserve habitat and open space, improve watershed health, and increase public access for compatible uses such as multi-use trails and related passive recreational amenities along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.

Vasquez Acquisitions and Interim Land Management Plan: Botanical field surveys of Vasquez Overlook (Vasquez II) have concluded. WCA is awaiting a draft report of the results.

Legal counsel has suggested the City of Azusa, the Vasquez Ranch, WCA, and the County all approve, execute, and record a modification of the City's easement to clarify rights over the road. Such agreement is expected to require approvals from the Azusa City Council and the County Board. WCA is pursuing conversations with the City of Azusa to pursue such approval.

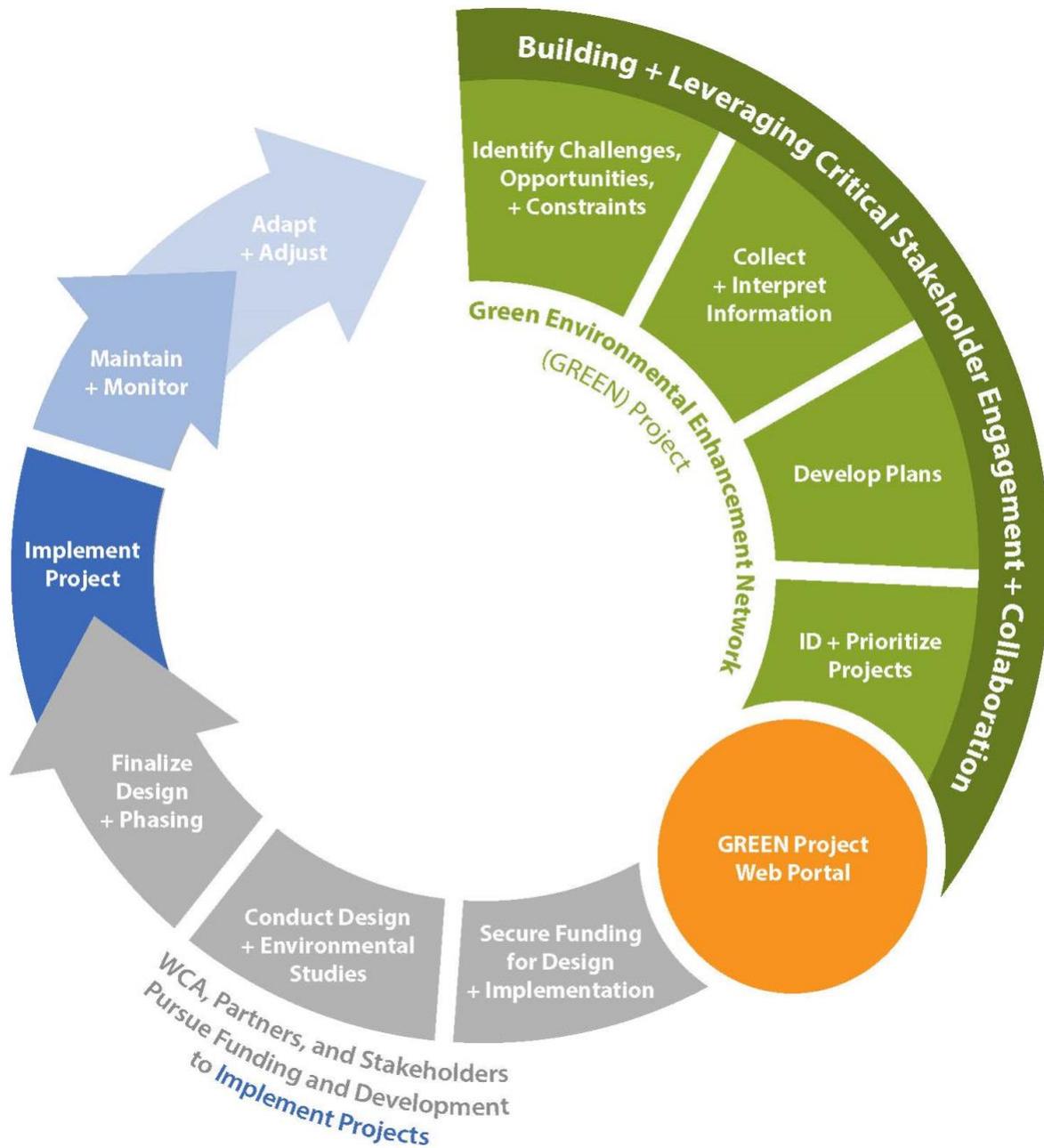
A journalist will be engaged to produce a short article on the Vasquez land and its history. The article will provide source material for future blog posts, social media, press releases and interpretive content. More importantly, it will provide an additional perspective to articulate the contemporary context of conservation in the foothills.



The Vasquez acquisitions (Vasquez I in 2016 and Vasquez II in 2020) protect some of the last undeveloped private holdings along the foothill interface between the San Gabriel Valley and the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument from development, in order to support watershed restoration, community-driven stewardship, and compatible public uses. WCA acquisition of these lands augments an existing cluster of contiguous public conservation lands in the Azusa Foothills that includes WCA's River Wilderness Park, Azusa-RMC Open Space, and City of Pasadena Open Space.

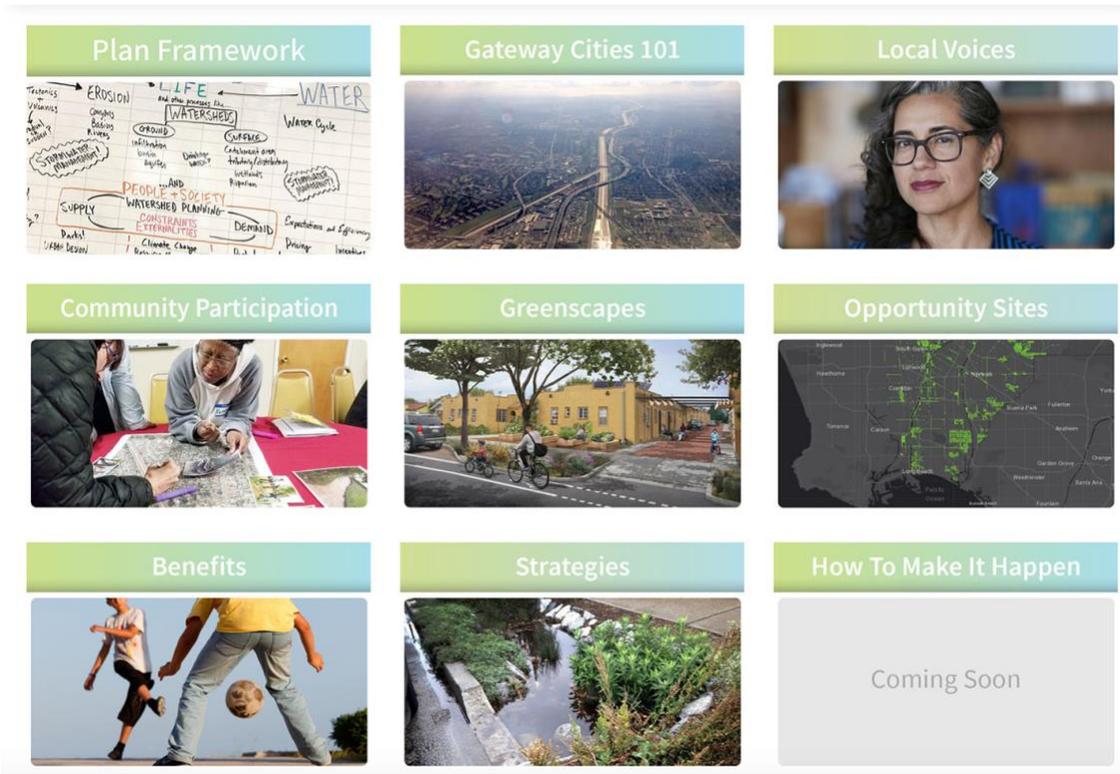
GREEN Project: The GREEN project is a multipart effort by the agency to promote urban greening in the WCA / RMC territory which has included engagement and support for regional plans as well as neighborhood and site-scale opportunities. Remaining deliverables are concentrated on both (1) the Duck Farm Equestrian Center update for water management, habitat, and operations improvements, and (2) for advancing work on the GREEN Project Portal including ongoing development of a strategic plan for the portal and the release of an RFP for software development.

The Duck Farm Equestrian Center Request for Proposals (RFP) for design services response period was extended and closed Monday July 6th. Two responses have been received, and are being scored by representatives from both the RMC and WCA. Based on scores a contractor team will be selected and a contract negotiated as approved.



The Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project is a planning and project implementation initiative supporting watershed-based greening efforts to help support collaboration in the wider Los Angeles and Orange County area. The scope of the project includes regional data collection and assessments, identification of priority projects, and community engagement strategies culminating in the launch of an online GREEN project portal to share data and information, and to catalyze investments and positive change.

Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan: Staff are completing written and visual content for the Gateway Greening website. Lyric Design & Planning has completed its work developing Greenscape maps and City Profile pages and WCA staff have integrated this work into the website. WCA anticipates completing a soft launch of the website for stakeholder feedback in the coming months as well as integration with the GREEN project portal in development.



Navigation buttons from the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Vision Plan homepage

With a grant from the Strategic Growth Council, the RMC, and partner collaboration the WCA is developing a green infrastructure plan for the Gateway Cities Region. The WCA is advancing collaborative integration of regional efforts as staff continues to engage in compatible regional planning initiatives—including the work of the AB530 Lower LA River Working Group. Together with the RMC-funded GREEN Project the plan is organized as an interactive web platform positioned to facilitate coordination, planning efforts, and funding for greening projects across the Gateway Cities and beyond.

Los Angeles River Environmental Flows Study Supplemental Analysis: WCA is compiling a list of entities to reach out to for the outreach component of WCA's scope.

WCA is in the process of reviewing the SCCWRP quarterly progress report.

The purpose of the Supplemental Analysis is to supplement the State Water Board funded Los Angeles River Environmental Flows Study to include a more robust analysis of the potential impacts to recreation, wildlife habitat, and water quality in the Lower Los Angeles River from reduced instream water flows resulting from increased wastewater re-use upstream. An RMC grant funds WCA's participation in the Stakeholder group and adding third-party review of the analysis.

Mt Baldy Wilderness Preserve: Dick Swinney continues his work compiling a flora (comprehensive list of occurring plants) of the Mt. Baldy Wilderness Preserve. The dedication sign has been restored (after vandalism) and will be reinstalled.

A grant application was made to Wildlife Conservation Board's Public Access Program for planning improvements to the preserve. The proposed project includes conducting a biological resources survey so the site's conservation value may be better protected, and improving access and programming for the public (considerations for parking, interpretation, restroom, and other amenities) at this popular site.



Acquired in 2014, the Mt. Baldy Wilderness Preserve is a 237+/- acre property located on the eastern extent of the Authority's territory, directly south of Mt. Baldy Village. This open space being is preserved in its undeveloped state. The site is publicly accessible for passive recreational use.

Crystal Lake Redevelopment and San Gabriel Canyon Master Planning: Request for Bid packages for Demolition and Construction work will be finalized and published August. Work is targeted to begin in October 2020 following Labor Day holiday and the close of the summer recreational high season. Work includes the construction of new camp host sites, kiosks and iron rangers at both Crystal Lake and Coldbrook campgrounds. Improvements to the Crystal Lake Visitor Center and the construction of a trash transfer station at Rincon Fire Station site. Additionally, the demolition of several old, unused restrooms and dilapidated ancillary buildings. Design work for the second access point at the East Fork/Oaks Picnic area is on-going. San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps, utilizing COVID-19 precautions, are continuing their conservation efforts in the San Gabriel Canyon under the direction of US Forest Service staff.

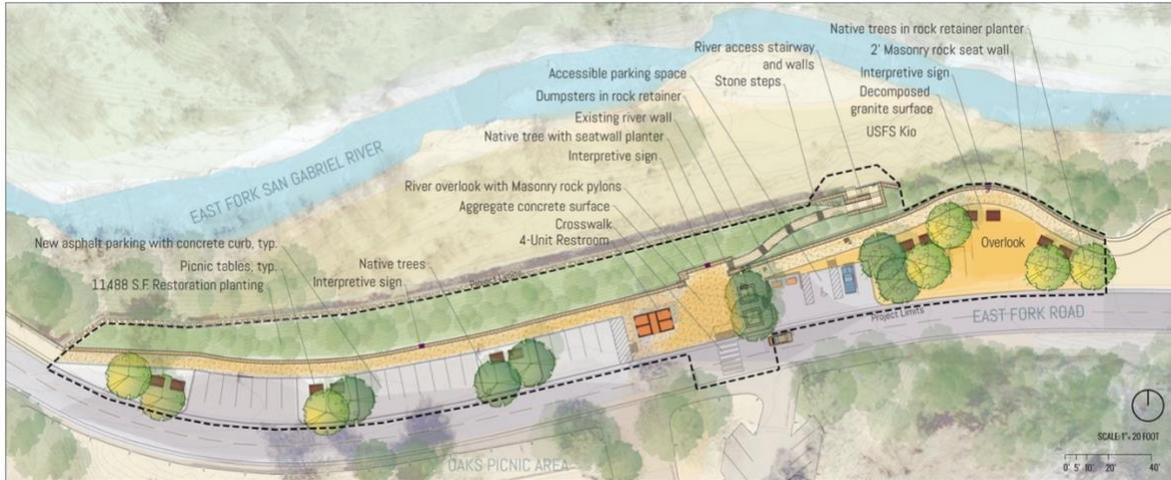
Crystal Lake Redevelopment and San Gabriel Canyon Master Planning, authorized by U.S. Forest Service under a Supplemental Project Agreement with WCA, to implement a redevelopment and enhancement conceptual planning effort for the Crystal Lake recreation area located in the Angeles National Forest, as well as, a recreation master plan for the San Gabriel Canyon area focusing on access, circulation, and recreational resources. Additionally, the implementation of maintenance and site improvements has been approved by USFS.

River Wilderness Park: Staff continues to work with City of Azusa and Design team to complete the design and approval process for the overlook and park entry improvement elements of the park. Due to both funding gaps and period limits on grant awards the roundabout and main visitor center are expected to be omitted from a first phase of implementation. Plans are in development to prepare for a construction phase beginning in the next year.



The RWP is an approx. 118-acre property envisioned to provide unique wilderness experiences in the lower San Gabriel River Canyon comprised of engaging landscapes, gathering spaces, thriving habitats, and a regional hub and welcome center for the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Project: WCA consultant, BlueGreen, has completed its work on the site design for the project's first access point, and has begun work on the design of an additional access point which extends the footprint of the current design. This portion will be funded through WCA's Master Participating Agreement with the Forest Service that was extended for an additional 12-months due to COVID-19 related impacts. WCA is awaiting notification from RMC of its grant award for construction of the Oaks River Access Project (first access point) under the Prop 68 grant. U.S. Forest Service anticipates making a decision of record on the EIS/EIR for the project in 2020.



Initial concept plan for the Oaks River Access project

Along a 2.5-mile segment of the East Fork San Gabriel River recreational use is highly concentrated. This heavy use combined with the lack of facilities has resulted in degraded conditions. In response, the Cattle Canyon Project seeks to better manage the recreational use and balance the needs for resource project within this area of the San Gabriel Mountains.

South Gate Habitat Restoration Project/Parque Dos Rios: The project obtain a Caltrans permit extension and is scheduled to remobilize the construction workforce by the end of July. The project has been demobilized since February 2020 related initially to awaiting permit amendment approval for LA County Flood Control District and then later due to COVID-19 stay at home orders throughout the nation. The interpretive signs have since been completed and are awaiting delivery to the general contractor, the Conservation Corps of Long Beach.



Parque Dos Rios is a 7.8-acre site situated along the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) at the confluence with the Rio Hondo in the City of South Gate. The project will create a bike stop amenity for the LLAR trail, with overlook, shade structure, seating and interpretive graphics. The land will be planted with natives and a raptor perch installed.

Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space: Construction of the West Trail Loop and overlooks (see photo below) has been substantially completed and a project team punch-list has been created during a site walk on June 18th. Upon completion of the list by the general contractor, Land Forms, the project will transition from construction to the contracted maintenance and establishment period.



WALNUT CREEK – WEST PHASE ONLY



Acquired in 2008, the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space Property is a total of approx. 60.8 acres. Approximately 6.7 acres are owned by the City of San Dimas and 54 acres are owned by the WCA.

City of San Dimas the City secured County Proposition A funding in the amount of \$850,000 to begin initial West Phase development. The initial phase includes trail development and amenities for a looped spur trail, habitat enhancements, and connect to the Antonovich Trail via County-operated trail staging areas.

River Ranger Program Implementation Project: WCA and RMC staff continue to hold one – on one meetings with project stakeholders this month as the team works toward the implementation of a Lower LA River REACH zone pilot program later this year. COVID19 conditions may impact ability of the project to complete desired level of outreach and public engagement and alternative opportunities and methods are being explored.

Virtual meetings were held with the City Managers of both the City of South Gate and the City of Downey regarding their participation and to obtain feedback regarding the program and rangers. Additionally, meetings were held with non-profit organizations regarding their participation on an advisory committee and to aid in the development of programming and conducting community engagement.



The River Ranger Program will foster connections between communities, agencies, and resources to promote safe, equitable usage and stewardship of the LA River and its tributaries as an activated and connected greenway that supports ecological, social, and recreational opportunities. The Los Angeles River Ranger Program Establishment Plan was finalized in June 2019 and the program is moving toward a pilot project in 2020.