

DATE: November 19, 2020
TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board
FROM: WCA Staff
THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Item 07: Liaison and Activities Report

Legislative Update

For full text and history of bills and initiatives, visit these web sites:

Federal Bills: <https://www.congress.gov>

State Bills: <http://www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

Current as of 11/09/2020

The following is the status of legislative bills that have been introduced in the current session by Senate and Assembly potentially of interest to the RMC and its respective Joint Powers Authorities. Bills can be tracked on the legislative website: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

PARKS AND WATER

AB 209 (Limón D) Parks: Outdoor Environmental Education: Grant Program

Introduced: 1/14/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 8/13/2019, **Status:** Chaptered

Summary: This bill is a reintroduction of last year's AB 2534. As a reminder, this bill would require the Director of Parks and Recreation to establish the Outdoor Equity Grants Program to increase the ability of underserved and at-risk populations to participate in outdoor environmental educational experiences at state parks and other public lands where outdoor environmental education programs take place. The bill would require the director to, among other things, give priority for funding to outdoor environmental education programs that primarily provide outreach to and serve pupils who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, foster youth, or pupils of limited English proficiency. To the extent that the skill sets of persons retained through the River Rangers Program include interpretative/naturalist aptitudes, the program envisioned in this bill may underwrite these positions.

The Governor's January Budget proposed \$20 million to underwrite the development and implementation of the provisions captured in this bill. However, given the state of economic affairs in California, this appropriation was struck in the May Revise.

AB 1659 (Bloom D) Large Electrical Corporations: Wildfire Mitigation: Securitization**Introduced:** 2/22/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 8/28/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Would enact the Wildfire Prevention and Community Resilience Act of 2020 and would require the Natural Resources Agency, in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission, to adopt an interim expenditure plan and an expenditure plan that are focused on reducing wildfire risk on the ground and in communities through activities such as defensible space implementation, home hardening, improved public safety, including expenditures to add trained emergency medical technicians to the workforce, and other authorized activities, as well as to prepare residents for wildfires through public education and outreach, as provided. The bill would establish the Wildfire Prevention and Community Resilience Fund and, upon appropriation by the Legislature, would require moneys in the fund be used for the implementation of those plans.

The language in the last iteration of this bill reflects an eleventh hour effort to move the “fire related pieces” contained in AB 3256 out of the Legislature and onto the Governor’s desk. Had this effort not stalled, RMC was eligible for funding for fire prevention, mitigation and restoration work through \$300 million program earmarked for the state conservancies.

AB 2103 (O’Donnell D) San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy: Territory: Dominguez Channel Watershed and Santa Catalina Island**Introduced:** 2/6/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Current law establishes the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy in the Natural Resources Agency and prescribes the functions and duties of the conservancy with regard to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of specified areas of the Counties of Los Angeles and Orange located along the San Gabriel River and the lower Los Angeles River and tributaries along those rivers. Current law, for purposes of those provisions, defines “territory” to mean the territory of the conservancy that consists of those portions of the Counties of Los Angeles and Orange located within the San Gabriel River and its tributaries, the lower Los Angeles River and its tributaries, and the San Gabriel Mountains, as described. This bill would additionally include the Dominguez Channel watershed and Santa Catalina Island, as described, within that definition of territory, and would make various related changes to the boundaries of that territory. This bill represents a repeat attempt at expanding the boundaries of the RMC. Last year’s AB 1694 stalled in the Senate Appropriations Committee and the author has made a concerted effort to partner with legislative colleagues in the joint authoring of this measure. Given the shift in focus and priority of the Legislature in light of recent events, authors were encourage to downsize bill portfolios. This bill was among the many casualties subject to leadership directives.

AB 2519 (Wood D) Conservation Projects: Grants: Advance Payments**Introduced:** 2/19/2020, **Last Amended Date:** 06/04/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Current law requires the Natural Resources Agency, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Department of Water Resources, and the State Water Resources Control Board to administer various grant programs relating to natural resources. This bill would require, to the extent not in conflict with any other law, the Natural Resources Agency, the conservancy, the department, and the board, when awarding grants for conservation projects, as defined, to provide an advance payment of up to 25% of the total grant award if requested by a grant recipient.

AB 3030 (Kalra A): Resource conservation: land and ocean conservation goals**Introduced:** 2/13/2020, **Last Amended Date:** 8/13/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Existing law declares it to be the policy of the state that the protection and management of natural and working lands, as defined, is an important strategy in meeting the state's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, and requires all state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions to consider this policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, expenditures, or grant criteria relating to the protection and management of natural and working lands.

This bill would declare it to be the goals of the state by 2030 to protect at least 30% of the state's land areas and waters; to help advance the protection of 30% of the nation's oceans; and to support regional, national, and international efforts to protect at least 30% of the world's land areas and waters and 30% of the world's ocean. The bill would declare it a further goal of the state to improve access to nature for all people in the state and to provide for recreational and educational opportunities, including wildlife-dependent recreational activities, with a specific emphasis on increasing access for communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities.

The bill would authorize the state to achieve these goals through specified activities. The bill would require the Natural Resources Agency to ensure that actions made in furtherance of these goals are conducted in a specified manner.

SB 367 (Hueso D) State Coastal Conservancy: Grants: Educational Projects and Programs**Introduced:** 2/20/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 6/13/2019, **Status:** Chaptered

Summary: Existing law authorizes the State Coastal Conservancy to fund and undertake plans and feasibility studies and to award grants to public agencies and nonprofits for these purposes. This bill would additionally authorize the conservancy to provide technical assistance, and award grants for that purpose. This bill would authorize the conservancy to undertake educational projects and programs for adults and for pupils in kindergarten to grade 12 and to award grants to nonprofits, educational institutions, public agencies, etc. for educational projects and programs related to the preservation, protection, enhancement, maintenance, enjoyment of coastal resources and for onsite and distance learning facilities, activities, and instruction programs that support the delivery of science, history and social science. Would authorize conservancy to award grants for the construction and improvement of structures and facilities used for those projects and programs.

SB 474 (Stern D) Very high fire hazard severity zone: state responsibility area: development prohibition**Introduced:** 2/21/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 6/19/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Formerly titled the California Wildfire Protection Act of 1990: Habitat Conservation Fund, this bill would establish the Wildlife Protection Subaccount in the Habitat Conservation Fund and would require the Controller, if an appropriation is made for this purpose in any fiscal year, to transfer \$30,000,000 from the General Fund to the subaccount, less any amount transferred from specified accounts and funds, to be expended by the board for the acquisition, enhancement, or restoration of wildlife habitat.

SB 886 (Archuleta D) Lower San Gabriel River Recreation and Park District: Establishment: Board of Directors**Introduced:** 1/23/2020, **Last Amended Date:** 5/18/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Current law authorizes the establishment of the Lower San Gabriel River Recreation and Park District by petition or resolution submitted to the Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission before January 1, 2020. Current law authorizes specified city councils, including the city council of the City of Montebello, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to appoint members to serve on the initial board of directors of the district. Under existing law, a violation of any rule, regulation, or ordinance adopted by the board of directors of a recreation and park district is a crime. This bill would extend the deadline to submit the petition or resolution establishing the district from January 1, 2020, to January 1, 2023.

SJR 14 (Archuleta D) Whittier Narrows Dam: Flood Protection Improvements: Federal Funding

Introduced: 2/26/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: This measure would urge the United States Congress to include and approve in its 2021 budget an appropriation of approximately \$385,000,000 to the United States of Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program to perform the critically needed construction and repair work on Whittier Narrows Dam to protect the citizens of southeastern Los Angeles County from catastrophic flooding.

According to the author's office, even though the resolution died, the funding it was requesting from the federal government for the Whittier Narrows Dam was secured so the bill was technically no longer needed.

CLIMATE CHANGE

AB 293 (Garcia, Eduardo D) Greenhouse Gases: Offset Protocols

Introduced: 1/28/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/2/2019, **Status:** Chaptered

Summary: Current law, until January 1, 2031, establishes the Compliance Offsets Protocol Task Force to provide guidance to the CA Air Resources Board in approving new offset protocols for a market-based compliance mechanism for the purposes of increasing offset projects with direct environmental benefits in the state while prioritizing disadvantaged communities, Native American or tribal lands, and rural and agricultural regions. This bill would require the task force to consider the development of additional offset protocols, including, but not limited to, protocols for the enhanced management or conservation of agricultural and natural lands, and for the enhancement and restoration of wetlands.

AB 2619 (Stone D) Coastal Resources: Program for Climate Resilience, Adaptation, and Access

Introduced: 2/20/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Would establish the Program for Coastal Resilience, Adaptation, and Access for the purpose of funding specified activities intended to help the state prepare, plan, and implement actions to address and adapt to sea level rise and coastal climate change. The bill would create the Coastal Resilience, Adaptation, and Access Fund in the State Treasury, and would authorize the California Coastal Commission and specified state agencies to expend moneys in the fund, upon appropriation in the annual Budget Act, to take actions, based upon the best scientific information, that are designed to address and adapt to sea level rise and coastal climate change, as prescribed.

AB 3256 (Garcia, Eduardo D) Economic Recovery, Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020

Introduced: 2/21/2020, **Last Amended Date:** 6/4/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Would enact the Economic Recovery, Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$6,980,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for an economic recovery, wildfire prevention, safe drinking water, drought preparation, and flood protection program.

If successful, the RMC would have been eligible to compete for funding for climate-related projects and programs through a \$500 million pot created for state conservancies. The last uncirculated version of the bill also contained a \$25 million call-out for the RMC.

SB 45 (Allen D) Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Prevention, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020

Introduced: 12/3/2018, **Last Amended Date:** 1/23/2020, **Status:** Dead

Summary: Would enact the Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$5,510,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for a wildfire prevention, safe drinking water, drought preparation, and flood protection program. Would also restore fire damaged areas, reduce wildfire risk, create healthy forest and watersheds, reduce climate impacts on urban areas and vulnerable populations, protect water supply and water quality, protect rivers, lakes, and streams, reduce flood risk, protect fish and wildlife from climate impacts, improve climate resilience of agricultural lands, and protect coastal lands and resources. There is a specific category contained in the bond that is LA River specific. This is the Senate climate/resources bond vehicle that will serve as a compliment to AB 3256. This bill would provide for the submission of these provisions to the voters at the November 3, 2020, statewide general election. The last iteration of this bill had over \$100 million identified for the RMC

FEDERAL

Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA)

Signed: August 4, 2020

Summary: Fully and permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and providing \$9.5 billion in funding to address a maintenance backlog at American national parks

There has not been a single year since the creation and enactment of the Land & Water Conversation Fund (LWCF) back in 1965 where the account was fully funded to its authorized amount of \$900 million. Funded through off-shore oil lease revenues and royalties, the LWCF is the only program at the federal level that provides for annual funding for park and conservation improvements in the US. Through the enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), the LWCF will be fully funded in perpetuity. The allocation or distribution formula associated with the LWCF is generally on a per capita basis or the percentage of a state's population compared to the rest of the nation. As the most populous state,

California has always received the lion's share of available funds. The bulk of the allocated funds are typically routed through the California Department of Parks and Recreation both for state park unit improvements and for sub-allocations on a competitive basis to local agencies for park and greenspace improvements. Conservancies such as the RMC are not eligible for allocations or awards. However, in addition to cities, counties and park-specific providing special districts, Joint Power Authorities (JPA's) such as the WCA can compete for local dollars. It is difficult to predict the amount of funds that will be available on an annual basis for local grants but it is estimated that it will exceed \$25 million. Importantly, grantees must provide a 50% match or greater to compete. In addition to the full funding of the LWCF, The Great American Outdoors Act provided for more than \$9 billion in one time funding for conservation, access and user amenity improvements on federal lands such as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. It has been sited that there is a backlog of deferred maintenance on these lands exceeding \$10 billion and this investment will go far to address this need. California is experiencing record numbers in state, local and federal land visitations due in large part to the outset of Covid-19 and the enactment of (GAOA) could not be more timely.

PROJECTS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument: At the September meeting of the San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative, Yassy Wilkins, Acting Partnership Coordinator of the Angeles National Forest (ANF), gave an update. ANF discussed forest closures and the impact of the Bobcat Fire across the Angeles. Firefighters have been doing incredible work protecting communities and properties, as well as cherished and unique places like the Mt. Wilson Observatory. Several major trails were affected by the fire and will need restoration help, including the Burkhart Trail, Silver Moccasin Trail, and Gabrielino Trail. Pressures on the Monument remain high with recreation access affected by COVID-19 and the Bobcat Fire. Both crises demonstrate the need to protect the communities in and around the National Forest, as well as the habitat within it.

San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative: On September 24, 2020, the SGMCC held a virtual meeting via Zoom. Angeles National Forest and Collaborative members conducted a partnership workshop focused on sharing best practices for building partnerships with the Forest Service. ANF announced that mapping for the Angeles National Forest trail system has been completed and data will be available soon. There will be an opportunity for the community and partner organizations to review the data. There are no updates on the Great American Outdoors Act. No additional prioritization or information from the Washington Office has been provided, but they did confirm receipt of the letter submitted by the SGMCC. The Trails and Recreation Committee discussed the impacts of the Lake and Bobcat Fires on planned work, as well as areas that will likely need restoration following these fires. The group also discussed new rules regulating e-bike usage on certain trails. The new regulation created a new OHV designation (E-Bike Only) that will begin to appear on recreation maps. The Transportation and Access Committee selected Belinda Faustinos (Nature For All) as the new committee chair. The Collaborative as a whole also discussed the process for requesting Letters of Support.

The next SGMCC meeting will be Thursday, November 19, 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: The fabrication of the shade structures glulam has been completed by the vendor and is awaiting final buyoff from Construction Manager (CM). A variety of submittals and request for information items are being reviewed, answered and settled between the Contractor and CM. These administrative actions are being processed while the site's landscaped areas are being readied for mulch and small plant installation. This readiness includes several weeks of leaching salts from the soil, integrating amendments into and raking out rocks from the planting areas. Colors callouts have been chosen for site furnishings and metal work. Met with Painting subcontractor to restore maintenance building and tunnel. Identified locations for botanical plant plaques and protective boulder locations for irrigation system. Specified a site video and alarm system to be installed to manage site after hours. WCA's Construction Manager continues to work with the General Contractor, Fast-Track Construction, to finalize change orders for new and deleted work and obtain final schedule to complete project anticipated to now be extended out to Spring 2021.



Riparian streambed collects water from the leaching process with footings for footbridge trail in the background.



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.

San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project: CTI Environmental, an environmental testing firm, tested the farm house for hazardous materials, in preparation for future partial demolition of a portion of the house structure and attached garage. Positive Plumbing has begun evaluating the existing septic system, in preparation for potential refurbishment / expansion. Following the results of these evaluations, Staff will prepare an RFP for a demolition contract, which will be brought before the Watershed Conservation Authority Board for approval.

WCA continues to work with the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County to prepare an escrow agreement for the Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) funding. 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.

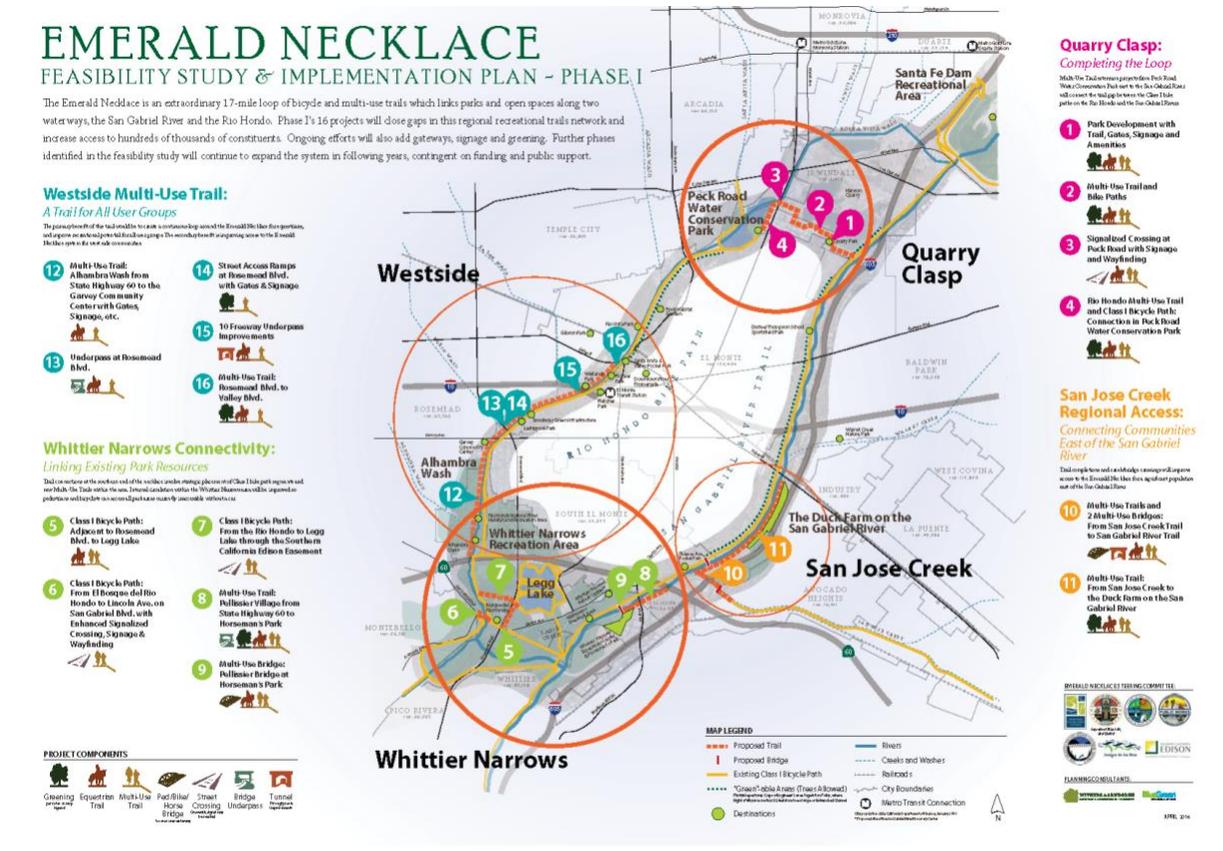


Duck Farm House Landscape and Water Project will include the construction of practical landscape-oriented water capture and conservation strategies that average homeowners can achieve in their own landscapes.

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: Department of Parks and Recreative (DPR) hosted the restart of Emerald Necklace team meetings on November 5th to discuss project implementation priorities for the Emerald Necklace and strategize on how the various stakeholders can work together to move the projects forward. The next Bi-Monthly EN Internal County Team Meeting will be December 1st and the next Quarterly EN Strategic Coordination Meetings will be February 4th. A tour of the priority project locations will be scheduled after the first of the year for interested team members. 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.



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.

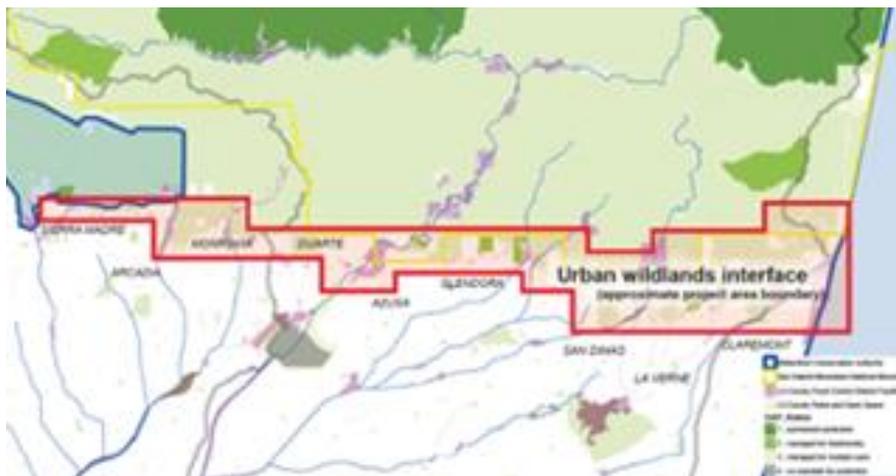
The Emerald Necklace Implementation Plan – Phase 1 (Proposed Project) includes 15 related projects that would close gaps in a regional recreational trails network and increase access to the trails to hundreds of thousands of people in the project area.

San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan: Psomas is refining the final prioritization map for the Report on Regional Biological Opportunities. Meanwhile, rapid assessment site visits to evaluate/confirm the potential for sensitive species on some of these unprotected undeveloped foothills lands are currently taking place as part of the Vasquez Overlook biological study. Gaining access to these unprotected lands, which are privately owned, has been a challenge. However, these Rapid Assessments are revealing important information that will fine tune our understanding of biological resources and management strategies for parcels being considered for acquisition.

Cogstone Resource Management has been engaged to study the use of foothills landscapes in the past by conducting a cultural records search and background research in the project area. The study will result in a letter report and maps. These materials will then become the basis for a future study on how native american uses of landscapes in the foothills in the past and present should bear on acquisition and management priorities for foothills conservation lands.

Staff is combing previous studies of the San Gabriel River Watershed for insights on how regional watershed management issues may also have bearing on acquisition prioritization.

Two UCLA Masters candidates in Urban Planning have submitted proposals to conduct studies on fire and the Wildlands Urban Interface. The proposed studies will include cost benefit analysis and case studies of fire management practices in other Mediterranean regions, and will result in design and policy recommendations to better align social and economic benefit.



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: The biological field survey of Vasquez Overlook (Vasquez II) has concluded. The report notes post-fire recovery of the Vasquez II property and high invertebrate and wildlife diversity. Currently, Cooper Ecological Monitoring is doing rapid assessments of other undeveloped lands along the Wildland Urban Interface to assess the regional context of biodiversity management priorities that should inform land management on Vasquez lands.

Both Tidal Influence (Vasquez I, 2019) and Cooper Ecological Monitoring (Vasquez II, 2020) emphasize that active management of these high quality ecosystems has potential to create negative impacts that must be weighed against benefits. WCA will solicit proposals to create an interim management plan for removing/managing select high priority invasive species on both Vasquez properties, and will seek to implement this plan in the early spring.

*“Based on our surveys during spring/summer 2020, we find that the majority of the Vasquez Overlook property is covered with a scrubby plant community recovering from a major wildfire (Colby Fire) in 2014, but that it still retains important habitat for native chaparral species typical of the lower foothill ecosystem in the San Gabriel Mountains. We documented 100 plant species (80 native), 65 species of birds, 10 species of mammals, and 20 species of butterflies, among other taxa. These species, which include such uncommon taxa as mountain lion (Puma concolor), Merriam’s chipmunk (Tamias merriami), and Greater Roadrunner (Geococcyx californianus), indicate the high ecological integrity of the property. We documented three special-status plant taxa and six special-status animals on or adjacent to the property, and discovered a population of native plant (California copperleaf *Acalypha californica*) that appears to be the only known occurrence in Los Angeles County (and the northernmost in the world).”*



Due diligence for Vasquez III is on schedule. A surveyor is setting control points to do a flyover to obtain aerial topography. The records search portion of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment has taken place.



A Preliminary/Conceptual Trail alignment from El Encanto Master Plan (2007) proposed a trail alignment linking River Wilderness Park with conservation lands to the south, such as Azusa RMC JPA.

As part of land management planning for the Vasquez properties, two trail builders have submitted proposals for preliminary trail alignments connecting Glendora Ridge Motorway from River Wilderness Park. WCA will eventually need to discuss the feasibility of obtaining easements over intervening properties with the property owners (public utilities) along those routes. Trail builders have indicated that the proposed route is feasible.

Environmental writer, Ilsa Setziol, is finalizing a draft of short article on the Vasquez land and its history.

The Vasquez acquisitions (Vasquez I in 2016 and Vasquez II in 2020) protect some of the last undeveloped private holdings along the foothills 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. Staff continues to engage in efforts including the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASC), and advancement of proof-of-concept for the GREEN Portal through specific improvements for the Gateway Greening Plan intended for incorporation. The WCA released a Request for Service Qualifications for Specialty Technical Services on October 9, 2020 and closed on November 6 2020, and an item is on the regular agenda for this November meeting to consider a Master Agreement that may support this and other efforts. At the site scale a concept plan will soon be completed for the Duck Farm Equestrian Center.



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 working toward 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 Vision Plan: The Vision Plan and its online portal is complete. WCA staff continues to solicit additional buy-in and feedback from key stakeholders prior to a public launch.

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: Technical Advisory meetings and a Stakeholder meeting have taken place. A progress report will be presented to the RMC Board on November 16, 2020. Habitat models and suitability criteria for representative species for six major habitat types for the LA River (five of which currently exist) are used to estimate the probability that each of the focal habitats and species can be supported under current flow conditions. This provides a baseline for predicting the effects of proposed reductions in flow which would occur if discharge from upstream water reclamation plants is reduced, or if increased stormwater capture occurs. SCCRWP aims to deliver the flow-target analysis to the State Board by the end of the calendar year. Baseline analysis findings include:

- Flow conditions are at least partially suitable to support freshwater marsh habitat, as indicated by Typha, which is consistent with field observations.
- Flows can generally support riparian habitat along the LA River. However, current modeling suggests that the River generally cannot support adult willows. This is likely due to either an artificially low stream power criteria in the model, or to seasonal scouring winter flows, or a combination of two.

- The lower LA River is characterized by flows that have a high probability to support wading shorebirds based on suitable flows for Cladophora.
- The river currently has flows that are at least partially suitable for coldwater fish such as the Santa Ana Sucker. This suggests that if temperature and substrate conditions were to be improved, flows would be appropriate for these species.
- Conditions are generally not conducive to steelhead migration except in the lowest reaches of the river, suggesting that both flow and habitat/substrate modification would be necessary to support migration.

SCCWRP has made available presentation to be used for outreach purposes. WCA will evaluate how this information can become source material for more accessible and engaging educational/outreach materials.

SCCWRP will work with WCA and third party consultants identified by WCA, to develop assumptions for analysis of Compton Creek and Rio Hondo restoration scenarios in January.

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 outreach and third-party review of the analysis.

Mt Baldy Wilderness Preserve: WCA had a kickoff meeting with Inland Empire Resources Conservation District (IERCD), who will be preparing a plan to manage and eradicate invasive plants at the Preserve. IERCD is currently mapping the project area, and will be submitting a proposal.

WCA staff has been evaluating a proposal made by Vista Communications in August 2019, to site a cell tower on the Preserve. WCA staff and legal counsel have been evaluating the lease terms proposed by Vista. WCA plans to ask Vista to hold an additional community meeting to clarify several aspects of the proposal. Such a meeting is advised before any consideration of the proposed lease by the WCA board.

WCA has also received a proposal from BaldyConnect to provide wireless internet service at the Preserve as an alternative to Vista's proposal for a macro tower. Staff evaluation of all viable communications scenarios for the Preserve will be included in a future board report.



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: Blue Green Consulting is in the process of updating the construction drawing packages based on direction received from USFS team during a November 2nd team meeting. The scope of work for the construction improvements includes renovation of camp host sites, information kiosks and iron rangers at both Crystal Lake and Coldbrook campgrounds. Area development 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, continues their conservation efforts in the San Gabriel Canyon under the direction of US Forest Service staff.

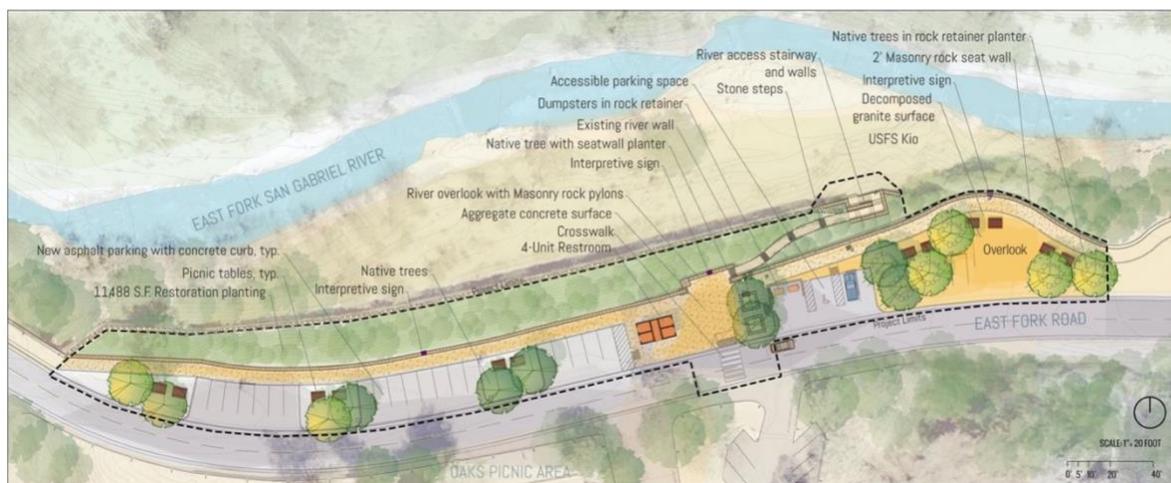
Crystal Lake Redevelopment and San Gabriel Canyon Master Planning, authorized by U.S. Forest Service under a Supplemental Project Agreement with WCA, to implement a redevelopment and enhancement conceptual planning effort for the Crystal Lake recreation area located in the Angeles National Forest, as 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: Plans are in development to prepare for a construction phase for the entry improvements beginning in the next year. The WCA is working with the City of Azusa and consultant team to work toward a 100% construction drawing package, and to consider feasibility of expediting specific elements with available funding for implementation by spring 2021. Cost estimates will be updated and determinations will be made by this next winter quarter. Additionally, conversations have continued with Caltrans to consider feasibility of the San Gabriel River bikeway underpass for the SR-39 Bridge identified in the River Wilderness Park Master Plan.



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 is in the process of designing 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 Conservation Corps of Long Beach (General Contractor) returned to the project site in late October to restart site preparation work. LA County Agriculture Department restarted weed control activities. The subcontractors are expected to return to the site by December with work to complete the project continuing into the new year. The interpretive signs were delivered to the general contractor, the Conservation Corps of Long Beach and are being stored at their Nietos campus until they are ready to be installed.



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: The contractor's work on the construction of the West Trail Loop and overlooks completed agreed to punch list items. Work remaining includes the fabrication of interpretive and operational signage, minor trail vegetation clearing and hydroseeding of the western edge of the property. WCA staff is finalizing the design of two interpretive panels that will be purchased and installed by the City at the two overlooks. Drafts of the signs are shown below.

A Disappearing Landscape

You're standing in a special place. The trees and shrubs around you form rare plant communities that support a rich variety of wildlife. Walnut Creek, below, flows under a dense canopy of trees dominated by Coast Live Oak and California Black Walnut. These shady woodlands open up to sunny slopes where shrubs like California Buckwheat provide food and shelter for birds, insects, reptiles, and small mammals. As our cities expand further into natural spaces, this unique habitat is disappearing. Less than five percent of natural riparian areas remain in Southern California. The County of Los Angeles has designated this landscape as a Significant Ecological Area¹ to help protect what remains. As you walk the trail, pay attention to the sights and sounds of nature. What makes this place significant for you?

Este paraje es un lugar especial. Los árboles y arbustos que te rodean forman comunidades de plantas que sustentan una rica variedad de vida silvestre. Walnut Creek, debajo, fluye bajo un denso dosel de árboles dominado por Coast Live Oak y California Black Walnut. Estos raras bosques abren a laderas soleadas donde arbustos como California Buckwheat proporcionan alimento y refugio a aves, insectos, reptiles y pequeños mamíferos. A medida que nuestras ciudades se expanden más allá de los límites naturales, este importante hábitat está desapareciendo. Menos del cinco por ciento de las áreas ribereñas naturales permanecen en el sur de California. El condado de Los Angeles ha designado este paisaje como parte de un "Área ecológica significativa" para ayudar a proteger lo que queda. Mira a tu alrededor. ¿Qué plantas y animales puedes ver?

PLANT COMMUNITIES
COMUNIDADES VEGETALES



RIPIARIAN OAK FOREST
Coast Live Oak
Quercus agrifolia



WALNUT WOODLAND
California Black Walnut
Juglans californica



COASTAL SAGE SCRUB
California Buckwheat
Eriogonum fasciculatum



California Gnatcatcher
Polioptila californica



YOU ARE HERE

Walnut Creek

Riparian Oak Forest | Walnut Woodland | Coastal Sage Scrub | Non-native Grassland

Coastal Sage Scrub is prime habitat for rare species, like the California Gnatcatcher.

A Natural Creek

Below us, down a wooded slope, flows Walnut Creek. The creek's frothing water is a source of life for many kinds of plants and animals. The dense canopy of trees shading the creek creates rippling green reflections on the water as people stroll nearby paths listening to the songs of birds. This peaceful place is Walnut Creek's last remaining natural segment. As the creek flows west, it meets the encroaching city and enters into a concrete channel for flood management. Here it takes on the runoff draining off our streets and out of our stormdrains. The creek eventually joins the San Gabriel River which drains south to the Pacific Ocean. With so few natural riparian areas left in our region, this part of Walnut Creek is as unique as it is rare. What can you do to help protect it?

Debajo de nosotros, por una pendiente boscosa, fluye Walnut Creek. El chorro de agua del arroyo es fuente de vida para muchos tipos de plantas y animales. La densa copa de árboles que nos cubre al arroyo crea oscilantes reflejos verdes en el agua mientras la gente pasea por los senderos cercanos escuchando al cantar de las aves. Este tranquilo lugar es el último segmento natural del arroyo Walnut Creek. A medida que avanza hacia el oeste, se encuentra con la ciudad que avanza y entra en un canal de concreto para la gestión de las inundaciones. Allí, recoge el agua que drena nuestras calles y nuestros desagües pluviales. El arroyo finalmente se une al río San Gabriel que desemboca en el sur hasta el Océano Pacífico. Con tan pocas áreas ribereñas naturales que quedan en nuestra ciudad, esta parte de Walnut Creek es tan única como rara. ¿Qué puedes hacer para ayudar a protegerlo?



Cactus Wren
Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus

The land surrounding Walnut Creek is important habitat for rare species, like the Cactus Wren.



HERE

San Gabriel River

Walnut Creek

West Covina

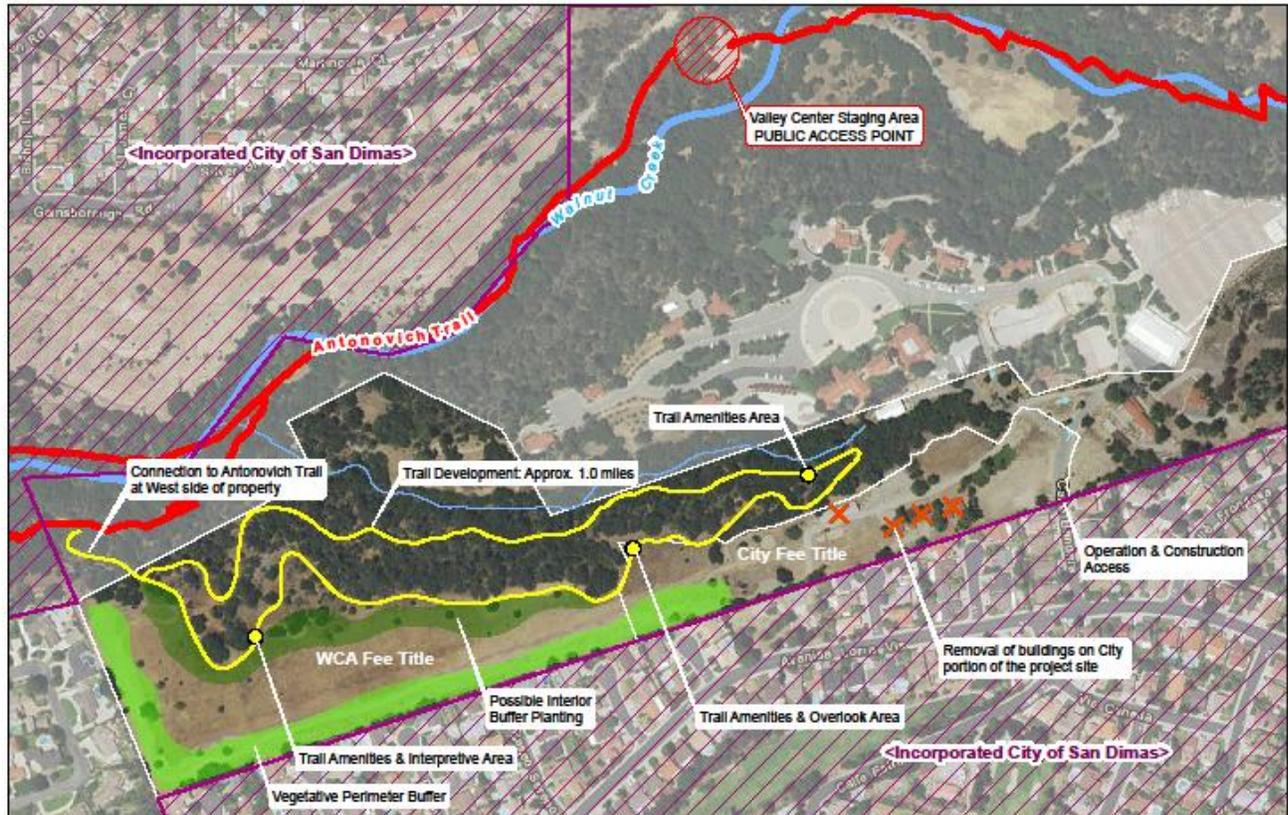
Natural Segment



In West Covina, Walnut Creek flows through a concrete channel for flood management.



Walnut Creek in San Dimas. This area is the creek's last remaining natural segment.



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. A virtual meeting was conducted with Trails LA County to provide an overview and update on the River Ranger Pilot Program, as well as explore potential opportunities for engagement. Meanwhile, COVID19 conditions and the uprising for police reform have changed the conversation on the methods to conduct the public safety program element. Several meetings with the Cities of Bell Garden, Downey, and South Gate have taken place to discuss their role in the public safety element.

A request for qualification was released on September 17th, 2020 to provide professional services as required for retained services to be used for program planning, development, and implementation to activate the Lower Los Angeles (LA) River Ranger Pilot Program REACH Zone One (1). Four (4) submissions were received on October 22nd, 2020 and a review team made up of WCA and RMC staff provided a preliminary evaluation of the proposals. This item is on today's agenda for consideration to authorize the

negotiation and entering into retainer agreements to provide services including but not limited to achieving the following program goals:

- 1) Recreational and/or Interpretative/Educational Programs to creatively activate the LA River in REACH Zone 1.
- 2) LA River Safety Ambassador Program to improve public safety for visitors on the LA River in REACH Zone 1.

The work of the consultants is intended to create a robust outreach and engagement plan to ensure ongoing information and communication with the public and stakeholder of use and enjoyment in and around the LA River.



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.