DATE: **June 23, 2021**

TO: **Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board**

FROM: **WCA Staff**

THROUGH: **Mark Stanley, Executive Officer**

SUBJECT: **Item 08: 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 5/15/2021

The following is the status of legislative bills that have been introduced in the current session by State of California 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 30 (Kalra D) Parks: Access to Nature
Introduced: 12/7/2020, **Amended:** 3/22/2021, **Status:** 2-Year Bill

Summary: This bill would declare that it is the established policy of the state that access to nature and access to the benefits of nature is a human right and that every human has the right to safe and affordable outdoor access, among other things. The bill would require all relevant state agencies, including the Natural Resources Agency, state departments, including the Department of Transportation, and their respective departments, boards, and commissions to incorporate this state policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, and grant criteria, or making expenditures, pertinent to the uses of outdoor access to nature, as provided.

AB 78 (O'Donnell D) San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy: territory: Dominguez Channel watershed and Santa Catalina Island.
Introduced: 12/7/2020, **Status:** Referred to Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee

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.

AB 564 (Gonzalez, Lorena D) Biodiversity Protection and Restoration Act
Introduced: 2/11/2021, **Status:** 2-Year Bill

Summary: Existing law provides that one of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's core programs is biodiversity conservation. This bill would establish the Biodiversity Protection and Restoration Act and would provide that it is the policy of the state that all state agencies, boards, and commissions shall utilize their authorities in furtherance of the biodiversity conservation purposes and goals of certain executive orders. The bill would require all state agencies, boards, and commissions to consider and prioritize the protection of biodiversity in carrying out their statutory mandates. The bill would require strategies related to the goal of the state to conserve at least 30% of California's land and coastal waters by 2030 to be made available to the public and provided to certain legislative committees by no later than June 30, 2022.

AB 963 (Kamlager D) Baldwin Hills Conservancy: Urban Watersheds Conservancy Expansion
Introduced: 2/17/2021, **Status:** 2-Year Bill

Summary: The Baldwin Hills Conservancy Act establishes, until January 1, 2026, in the Natural Resources Agency, the Baldwin Hills Conservancy, created with the purpose, among other purposes, to acquire and manage public lands within the Baldwin Hills area, as defined. This bill would expand the area covered by the conservancy to include the southern Ballona Creek Watershed, as defined, and the Upper Dominguez Channel, as defined. The bill would rename the conservancy the Baldwin Hills and Urban Watersheds Conservancy and make conforming changes. This bill contains other related provisions and other existing laws.

AB 1500 (Garcia, Eduardo D) Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, and Workforce Development Bond Act of 2022
Introduced: 2/19/2021, **Amended:** 4/14/2021, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Rules Committee

Summary: Would enact the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, and Workforce Development Bond Act of 2022, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of $6,955,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, drought preparation, flood protection, extreme heat mitigation, and workforce development programs.

SB 45 (Portantino D) Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022
Introduced: 12/7/2020, **Amended:** 4/8/2021, **Status:** Ordered to Inactive File on Request of Senator Portantino

Summary: Would enact the Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of $5,595,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for a wildfire prevention, safe drinking water, drought preparation, and flood protection program.

SB 268 (Archuleta D) Lower Los Angeles River Recreation and Park District: Lower San Gabriel River Recreation and Park District: Establishment of Board of Directors
Introduced: 1/28/2021, **Amended:** 4/5/2021, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Local Government and Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committees. Hearing in Assembly Local Government Committee on June 23, 2021

Summary: Existing law authorizes 10 specified city councils to each appoint one member, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to appoint 2 members, to serve at the pleasure of the appointing entity on the initial board of directors of the Lower Los Angeles River Recreation and Park District. Existing law also authorizes the city councils of the Cities of Commerce, Downey, Montebello, and Pico Rivera to jointly appoint one member to serve a 2-year term on the initial board of directors of the district. This bill would authorize the city councils of the Cities of Commerce, Downey, Montebello, and Pico Rivera to each appoint one member to serve at the pleasure of the appointing city council on the initial board of directors of the district, rather than to jointly appoint one member to serve a 2-year term. The bill would authorize the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to appoint 3 members, rather than 2 members, to serve on the initial board of directors of the district. This bill would extend the deadline to submit the petition or resolution to the Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission from January 1, 2020 to January 1, 2024. This bill would remove the authorization for the Montebello City Council to appoint a member to the district's initial board of directors and would authorize the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to appoint one additional public member.

SB 337 (Newman D) West Coyote Hills Conservancy Program
Introduced: 2/8/2021, **Amended:** 3/9/2021, **Status:** 2-Year Bill

Summary: This bill would, until January 1, 2028, establish the West Coyote Hills Conservancy Program, to be administered by the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and to undertake projects and award grants in the West Coyote Hills area, as described, for purposes relating to improvement of public access, and the protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural resources in the area. The bill would prescribe the duties of the conservancy with regard to the implementation and administration of the program. The bill would create the West Coyote Hills Conservancy Program Account within the fund, for the purpose of depositing and disbursing funds, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for program purposes. The bill would require that the $28,500,000 appropriated in the Budget Act of 2021 for the purposes of this bill be deposited in the account to be used for the purchase of specified property and related projects. The bill would make findings and declarations regarding funding under the bill for the board to open up, operate, and maintain the Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve, and would state the intent of the Legislature in enacting this act to specify the particular uses of the appropriated funds.

<u>SB 347 (Caballero D)</u> Urban Forestry: California Tree Fund
Introduced: 2/9/2021, **Amended**: 3/17/2021, **Status:** Hearing in Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee on June 21, 2021

Summary: The California Urban Forestry Act of 1978 requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to implement a program in urban forestry to encourage better tree management and planting in urban areas. Under the act, the department has established a grant program to provide grants for, among other projects, projects for urban forest management activities. This bill would allow a taxpayer to designate an amount in excess of personal income tax liability to be transferred into the California Community and Neighborhood Tree Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund, which the bill would create. The bill would require the Franchise Tax Board to revise the tax return to include a space for this fund for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2021, and until January 1, 2028, unless the fund fails to meet an annual minimum contribution amount of $250,000, in which case these provisions would be repealed on December 1 of that year. The bill would require moneys transferred to the California Community and Neighborhood Tree Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund to be continuously appropriated and allocated to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to the grant program for urban forest management activities under the California Urban Forestry Act of 1978 and to the Franchise Tax Board and the Controller for related administrative costs, as provided.

<u>SB 624 (Hueso D)</u> Environmental Equity and Outdoor Access Act
Introduced: 2/18/2021, **Amended:** 4/19/2021, **Status:** Hearing in Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee on June 17, 2021

Summary: This bill would establish the Environmental Equity and Outdoor Access Act, which sets forth the state's commitment to ensuring all Californians can benefit from, and have meaningful access to, the state's rich cultural and natural resources. The bill would provide that the Legislature finds and declares that it is the policy of the state to, among other things, promote inclusivity and representation and improve competency, as specified, among staff of the agency and each department, board, office, conservancy, and commission within the agency, to ensure all Californians and visitors of the state feel safe and welcome in the outdoors. The bill would authorize the Natural Resources Agency, and each department, board, office, conservancy, and commission within the agency, to take targeted actions, including those that prioritize communities of color, economically disadvantaged communities, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, women, and individuals belonging to more than one of these groups, to reduce elevated barriers to access and increased exposure to environmental health risks that disproportionately impact these communities and people to ensure equitable environmental protection and outdoor access is achieved.

CLIMATE CHANGE

<u>AB 585 (Rivas, Luz D)</u> Climate change: Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program
Introduced: 2/11/2021, **Amended:** 3/17/2021, **Status:** Waiting for Senate Committee Assignment

Summary: Existing law requires the Natural Resources Agency every 3 years to update the Safeguarding California Plan, the state's climate adaptation strategy. As part of the update, existing law requires the agency to coordinate with other state agencies to identify a lead agency or group of agencies to lead adaptation efforts in each sector. Existing law requires state agencies to work to maximize specified objectives related to climate change. Existing law establishes the Office of Planning and Research in state government in the Governor's office. This bill would establish the Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program and would require the Office of Planning and Research to administer the program. Under the program, the bill would require the Office of Planning and Research to coordinate the state's efforts to address extreme heat and to facilitate the implementation of local, regional, and state climate change planning into effective projects through the awarding of competitive grants to eligible entities for implementation of those projects. The bill would establish the Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Fund in the State Treasury and would require the office, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to expend moneys in the fund for the implementation of the program.

<u>AB 897 (Mullin D)</u> Office of Planning and Research: Regional Climate Networks: Climate Adaptation Action Plans
Introduced: 2/17/2021, **Amended:** 4/19/2021, **Status:** Waiting for Senate Committee Assignment

Summary: Existing law requires, by July 1, 2017, and every 3 years thereafter, the Natural Resources Agency to update, as prescribed, the state's climate adaptation strategy, known as the Safeguarding California Plan. Existing law establishes the Office of Planning and Research in state government in the Governor's office. Existing law establishes the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program to be administered by the office to coordinate regional and local efforts with state climate adaptation strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change, as prescribed. This bill would authorize eligible entities, as defined, to establish and participate in a regional climate network, as defined. The bill would require the office to encourage the inclusion of agencies with land use planning authority into regional climate networks. The bill would authorize a regional climate network to engage in activities to address climate change, as specified.

<u>AB 1384 (Gabriel D)</u> Resiliency Through Adaptation, Economic Vitality, and Equity Act of 2022
Introduced: 2/19/2021, **Status:** Hearing in Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee on June 29, 2021

Summary: Existing law establishes the Strategic Growth Council in state government consisting of various state agency heads and 3 public members. Existing law assigns to the council certain duties relative to the identification and review of activities and funding programs of state agencies that may be coordinated to improve air and water quality, improve natural resource protection, increase the availability of affordable housing, improve transportation, meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, encourage sustainable land use planning, and revitalize urban and community centers in a sustainable manner. This bill would require the council to develop and coordinate a strategic resiliency framework that makes

recommendations and identifies actions that are necessary to prepare the state for the most significant climate change impacts modeled for 2025, 2050, and beyond, among other goals. The bill would require state agencies identified in the strategic resiliency framework to collaboratively engage with regional entities to enhance policy and funding coordination and promote regional solutions and implementation and to proactively engage vulnerable communities whose planning and project development efforts have been disproportionately impacted by climate change, as provided. The bill would authorize the Treasurer, and the financing authorities that the Treasurer chairs, to assist state agencies by leveraging public and private capital investment to help with loans and other incentives to attain the goals identified in the strategic resiliency framework.

SB 83 (Allen D) Sea Level Rise Revolving Loan Program
Introduced: 12/15/2021, **Amended:** 5/20/21, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Natural Resources Committee

Summary: Current law establishes in state government the Ocean Protection Council. Current law requires the council to, among other things, establish policies to coordinate the collection, evaluation, and sharing of scientific data related to coastal and ocean resources among agencies. Current law establishes the State Coastal Conservancy with prescribed powers and responsibilities for implementing and administering various programs intended to preserve, protect, and restore the state's coastal areas. This bill would require the council, in consultation with the conservancy, to develop the Sea Level Rise Revolving Loan Program for purposes of providing low-interest loans to local jurisdictions for the purchase of coastal properties in their jurisdictions identified as vulnerable coastal property, as provided.

SB 595 (Caballero D) Climate Change Adaptation: Workforce Development Retraining
Introduced: 2/18/2021, **Status:** 2-Year Bill

Summary: Existing law requires the Natural Resources Agency to develop, and update every 3 years, the state's climate adaptation strategy and coordinate with other state agencies to identify a lead agency or group of agencies to lead adaptation efforts in specified sectors. Existing law also establishes the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program, to be administered by the Office of Planning and Research, to coordinate regional and local efforts with state climate adaptation strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change in order to facilitate the development of holistic, complimentary strategies for adapting to climate change impacts. This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation that would require climate change adaptation regulations to take into account workforce development retraining needs and plans to meet those needs.

SB 604 (Caballero D) Natural Resources: The Nature and Parks Career Pathway and Community Resiliency and Equity Act of 2021
Introduced: 2/18/2021, **Amended:** 4/5/2021, **Status:** 2-Year Bill

Summary: This bill, upon appropriation by the Legislature, as provided, would establish the Nature and Parks Career Pathway and Community Resiliency and Equity Act of 2021, which would require state conservancies and the Wildlife Conservation Board to establish grant programs to fund climate mitigation, adaptation, or resilience, natural disaster, and other climate emergency projects, as specified.

The Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act (H.R. 803)
Sponsor: Rep. DeGette, Diana [D-CO-1] (Introduced 02/04/2021) **Cosponsors:** (3) Committees: House - Natural Resources; Armed Services Senate -Energy and Natural Resources
Latest Action: Senate - 03/02/2021 Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

This package of bills, is championed in California by Reps. Carbajal, Chu, Huffman, and Schiff, and will protect one million acres of public land and more than 500 miles of rivers in the San Gabriel Mountains, the Santa Monica Mountains, the Central Coast and Northwest California, in addition to public lands and rivers in Arizona, Colorado, and Washington. It is a key step forward to ensuring equitable access to public lands and achieving California's and the nation's goals to conserve 30% of its lands and waters by 2030.

The bill also includes the Outdoors for All Act (Rep. Barragán), which codifies the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program. The ORLP program provides grants for outdoor recreational opportunities in urban and low-income cities nationwide. Together, these efforts are key to addressing the climate crisis, ensuring equitable access to public lands and supporting public health and economic recovery in California.

This legislation is also critical to achieving the goals outlined in President Biden's and Governor Newsom's recent Executive Orders to protect at least 30% of our land and waters by 2030 to address the climate and extinction crisis and build resilience. The White House supports the bill andstatedit is consistent with these climate goals.

Last year, similar legislation to protect California public lands and rivers passed the House twice. Then-Senator Kamala Harris and Senator Dianne Feinstein also previously championed similar efforts in the Senate. Advocates are urging the Senate to move quickly to pass these protections this year. The bill includes protections for the following special wild places in California:

In the **Los Angeles area**, the bill would expand the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by over 109,000 acres to include the western Angeles National Forest. The bill would also designate over 30,000 acres as protected Wilderness and over 45 miles of Wild and Scenic rivers throughout the San Gabriel range. The bill would also establish a National Recreation Area in the San Gabriel Valley. (HR 693-Rep. Chu)

The bill would add more than 191,000 acres of the Rim of the Valley Corridor to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The Rim of the Valley stretches from the Simi Hills and Santa Susanas to the Verdugos and on to the San Gabriel Mountains. This is a vital wildlife corridor for animals such as mountain lions, bobcats, and golden eagles.

Protection of public lands and rivers in **Northwest California**, including in Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity counties. This includes protecting about 317,000 acres of public lands as wilderness, designating 379 miles of new wild and scenic rivers, and requiring management plans for an additional 101 milesof existing wild and scenic rivers to help ensure these watersheds continue to safeguard endangered salmon and steelhead populations, recreational opportunities, and drinking water for downstream communities.

Protection of special places in the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument, located in the Central Coast region. This includes approximately 245,000 acres of Wilderness, two scenic areas encompassing 34,882 acres, and about 159 miles of Wild and Scenic rivers. This would be the first wilderness protection on the Central Coast in twenty years, and is particularly important as many of these areas are currently under threat from extractive industries. The measure also includes the designation of a 400 mile-long trail, the Condor National Scenic Trail, which would connect the northern and southern portion of the Los Padres National Forest by a single hiking route.

PROJECTS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument: Angeles National Forest's Forest Service is not able to provide a timeline for making a decision on the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project at this time. The last step will be publishing the final Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

San Gabriel Mountain Community Collaborative (RMC17024): The last San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative was held virtually on May 27, 2021. Matthew Bokach provided updates from the Forest Service on USFS partnering needs. Members spent time in break-out rooms sharing current projects and priorities. The meeting concluded with an optional work session to highlight and coordinate on future funding opportunities. Next meeting is July 22, 2021, 10am-3pm.

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

River Park (formerly Duck Farm) Project: Work is proceeding on the project, including finishing work for the new entrance, east and west plazas, permeable parking, restroom, and wall improvements for the surrounding neighbors. Approximately 27,000 plants and trees have been planted with support from WCA staff and the Conservation Corps of Orange County and Los Angeles. Final elements include completing the overhead covers for shade structures, laying boulders and gravel in supplemental drainage basins, grading decomposed granite, installing decorative entrance gates, and surfacing the entrance.

Upper riparian area plants are already getting established, and open areas planted.

Entry sidewalk and parkway poured and completed, and demonstration garden and restroom finished.

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.

<u>San Gabriel River Center (Duck Farm House) and Gardens Project:</u>

Staff continue to work on an RFP for design services for the San Gabriel River Center, with an expected release this summer.

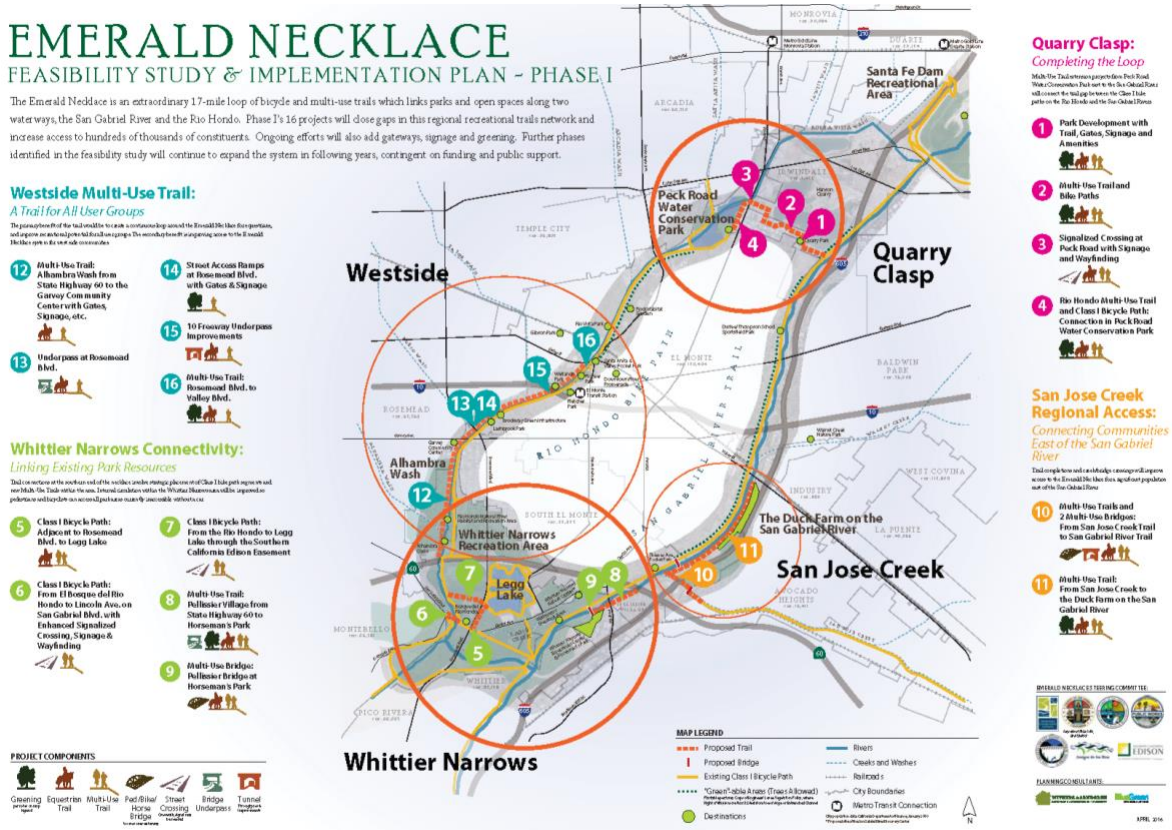
To support the forthcoming San Gabriel River Center, which will require additional capacity in the parking lot, BlueGreen Design completed a survey of the parking area as well as construction documents for a parking lot extension, which are under review. The existing parking lot, which includes permeable pavers installed under Fast Track Construction's contract for the larger park, will include additional permeable pavers in the extension. A deposit for the required pavers was paid in order to ensure the pavers match those already installed. Funding for this parking extension will be supplemented by the SEP.

The San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project will transform a 1929 Spanish colonial revival iconic farmhouse into a water- wise educational resource and visitor center for the public. The surrounding demonstration gardens will include the construction of practical landscape-oriented water capture and conservation strategies that average homeowners can achieve in their own landscapes.

<u>San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network Implementation Plan</u>: The 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 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.

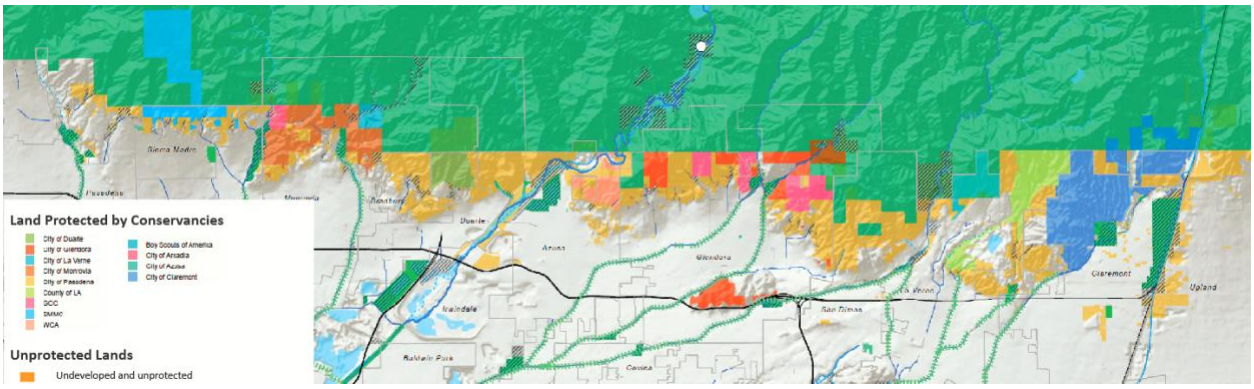
The Emerald Necklace Implementation Plan – Phase 1 (Proposed Project) includes 15 related projects that would close gaps in a regional recreational trails network and increase access to the trails to hundreds of thousands of people in the project area.

San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan: Work on the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan has concluded. The plan includes prioritization metrics by Psomas, Rapid Field Assessments by Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Cultural sensitivity analysis by Cogstone Resource Management, targeted assessments of potential restoration opportunities by Balance Hydrologics and Stillwater Sciences, and contributions by Trust for Public Land, Lee-Anne Milburn.

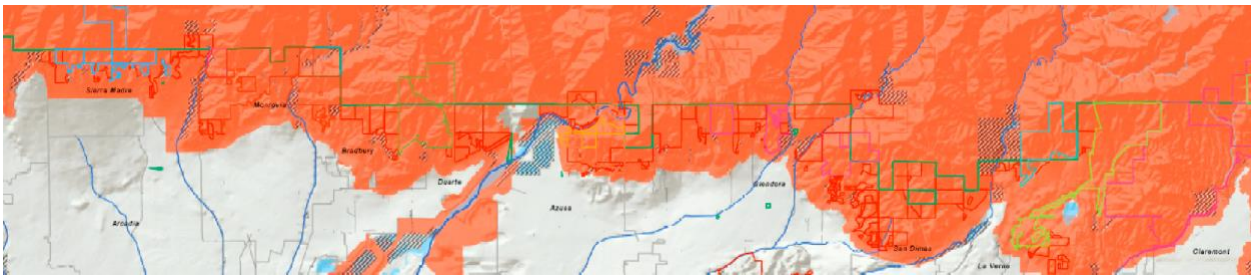
WCA was client advisor to UCLA Master of Urban Planning candidates Zachary Zeilman and Matthew Mello for their capstone projects on "Living Alongside Wildfire," and both candidates have submitted their final work to be included in the Appendix to the WCA study. Zeilman's study remarks, "Given the patterns over the last few decades, fire risk is predicted to continue to grow, as longer periods of drought and higher temperatures are bookended by more precipitation falling during fewer storm events. Recent literature has indicated three primary factors that are producing these significant changes across the western United States in the last few decades. These include a warming and drying climate, the build-up of fuels, and the expansion of the wildland–urban interface (WUI). Until recently, this had not been widely understood or acted upon at the public policy or legislative level."

Zeilman cites a study by Syphard et al. (2016) which demonstrates how acquisition of land for fire risk reduction and biodiversity conservation can fulfill these mutual objectives.

A summary of the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan will be presented at a future board meeting.



Conservation successes in the study area include thousands of acres of land preserved, over preceding decades, by local conservancies and municipalities. Orange areas show undeveloped unprotected lands that are evaluated for conservation priority by this study.



All study area lands are in CalFIRE-designated Severe Fire Hazard Zone.

The San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan 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: Negotiation with Vasquez family continues regarding WCA acquisition of the Vasquez 'Access' 035 parcel. Issues under discussion involve specific location of the proposed boundary line, and how to ensure the possibility of future public access to public open space, while addressing the security concerns of Vasquez Ranch.

It has been suggested that if WCA purchase the portion of the property with the road, the Vasquez family will be granted an easement over the road to access the houses they will be building on the southern portion of the parcel. At the same time, the Vasquez family has requested to pave the road with any material they choose, and to maintain the road. They have also requested to continue to access the road with any form of transportation, including motorized vehicles. They have also requested for WCA to pay for a fence to protect the avocado orchards if public access occurs.

WCA and Vasquez Ranch will work together to refine a boundary line which can be staked on site so that survey monuments can be placed, and a legal description produced.

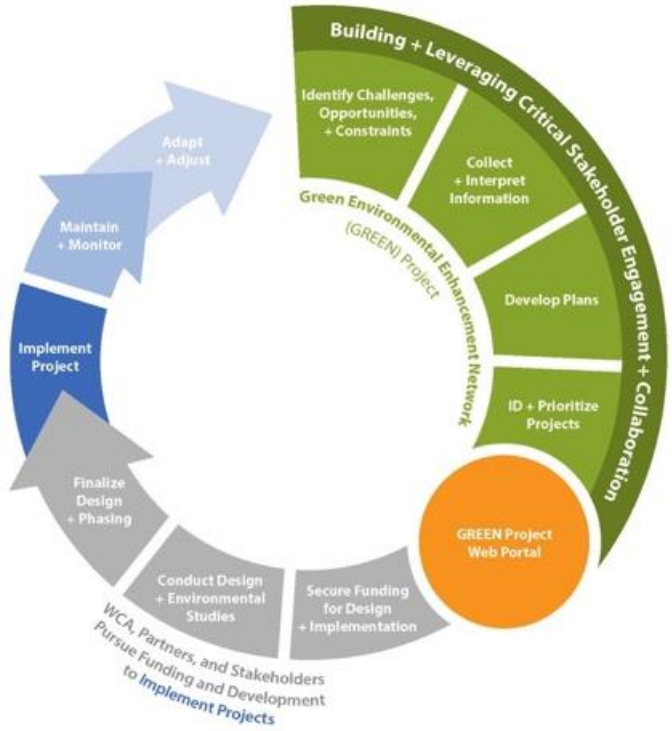
LEFT: Azusa foothills conservation lands RIGHT: Conceptual trail route from River Wilderness Park to Vasquez lands and Azusa-RMC JPA

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: At the site scale concept plans and project descriptions have been updated in April and are under review by County Regional Planning and Public Works Land Development. In addition to a funding request to the RMC a funding request has been made through the office of Graciela Flores Napolitano for US congressional funding consideration for the FY 2022 budget.

Staff continues to engage in efforts including research and support for project opportunities, and also the advancement of proof-of-concept for the GREEN Portal.

Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Vision Plan: The Vision Plan and its online portal is complete, and WCA staff will be sharing the website link and summaries with partners and on public platforms following final presentations at this meeting and with the Gateway Cities COG. Additional feedback received will be taken into consideration for continued developments through the GREEN Project.



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.

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: Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) has submitted the Los Angeles River Environmental Flows Project and Management Targets to the State Water Board.

As described in Item 13 of today's agenda, an RFP has been issued for engagement activities and workforce development to support WCA's Supplemental Study.

Additionally, WCA is producing an RFP, in conversation with MRCA, that will combine third party review of the SCCWRP Flow Study with baseline vegetation mapping in the channel of the Los Angeles River.

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.

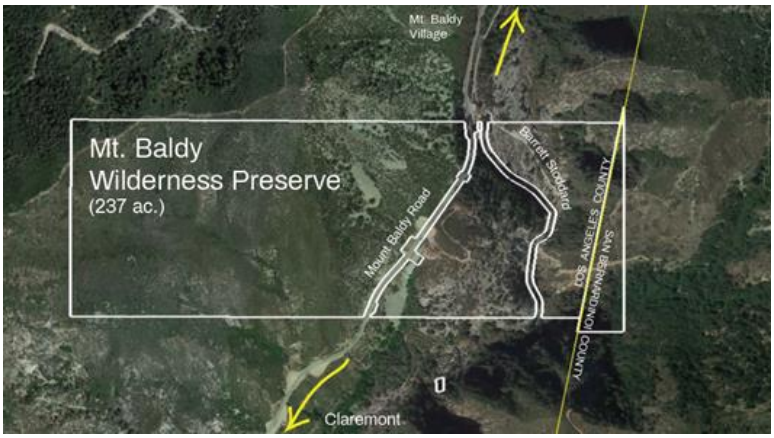
Mt Baldy Wilderness Preserve: WCA is collaborating on a grant application with San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps (SGVCC) to fund implementation of the invasive species management plan produced by Inland Empire Resources Conservation District (IERCD).

Invasive species removal, monitoring, and mapping performed by SGVCC and IERCD are planned to occur in conjunction with stewardship activities that involve SGVCC crew members in developing messaging about fire-safe recreation practices that can be used in signage and social media at this and other WCA parks.

Invasive Spanish broom along the Old Road

Invasive Spanish broom in the floodplain.

Graffiti abatement sites



Broom Removal Areas: 6.7 Acres

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: Construction Bids were received and a contract awarded along with a Notice to Proceed. Work authorized under the construction contract includes the demolition of an abandoned Warehouse, site clearance, and area development improvements at the Crystal Lake Visitor center creating an outdoor courtyard with seating areas and interpretive and operational signage. Other upgrades and amenities include new exterior building paint, lighting, railing and stair repair, drinking fountain, kiosk and new iron ranger. Work is being supported with the assistance of USFS staff. Work will be completed by June 30, 2021.

Additionally, USFS is drafting a new Phase II Master Agreement to continue the partnership and collaborative planning and implementation of projects within the forest between the WCA and USFS.

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, a recreation master plan for the San Gabriel Canyon area focusing on access, circulation, and recreational resources. The implementation of maintenance and site improvements has been approved by USFS.

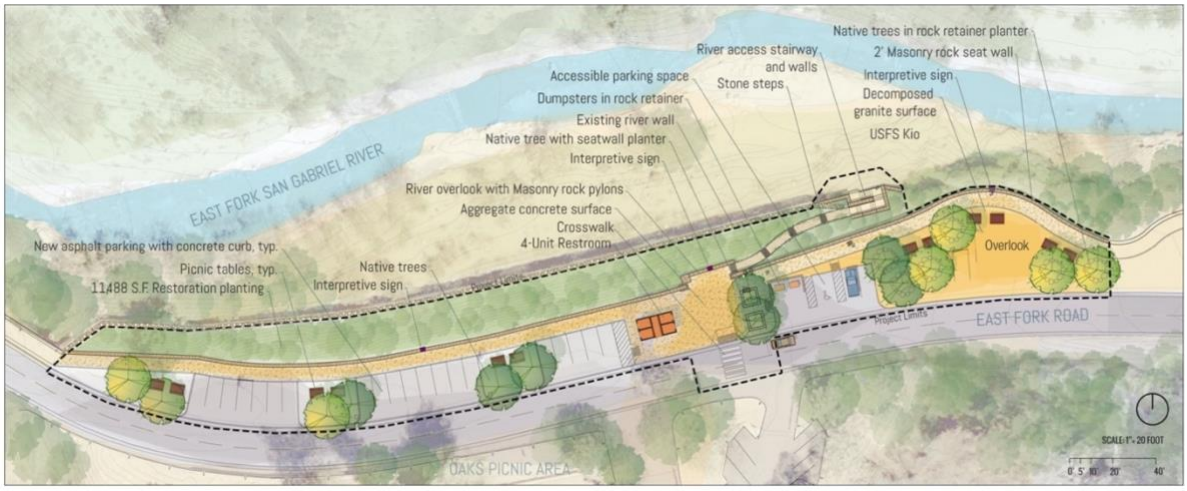
River Wilderness Park: Completed construction drawings are going before the City of Azusa Planning Commission today June 23rd. WCA staff continues to seek funding to implement project elements. Construction cost estimates are currently impacted by market rates following Covid responses.

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, and is due to be completed by the end of June.

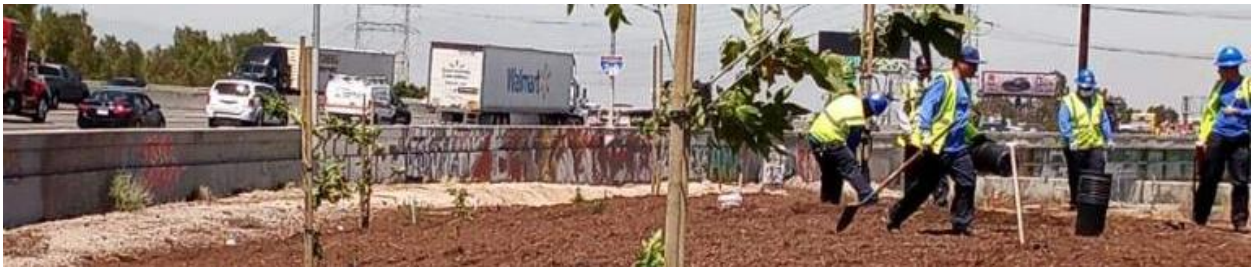
In support of the project, WCA requested an amendment to its RMC19001 grant budget and time extension due to delays caused by ongoing litigation involving the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for projects in San Gabriel Canyon. The amendment budget will cover legal fees and a supplemental study required to resolve legal challenges and move the project forward. The amendment was approved by the RMC board and accepted by the WCA board in June.



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.

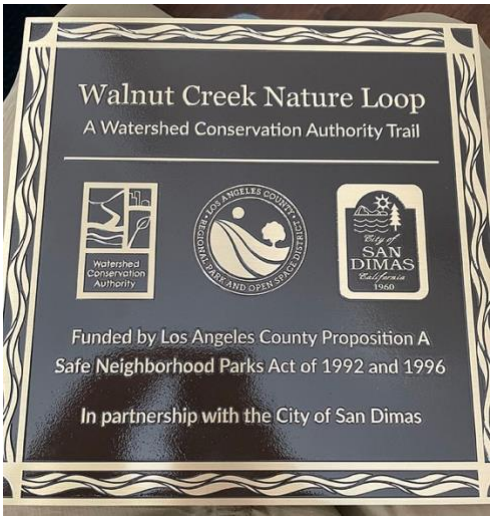
<u>South Gate Habitat Restoration Project/Parque Dos Rios:</u> Work has progressed on the site to complete the remaining metal work at the overlook, signage, constructing the additional southern overlook, installation of pavers, visitor amenities including seating, interpretive signage and viewscopes, and capping of the project with the installation of the iconic decorative metal entry gates.



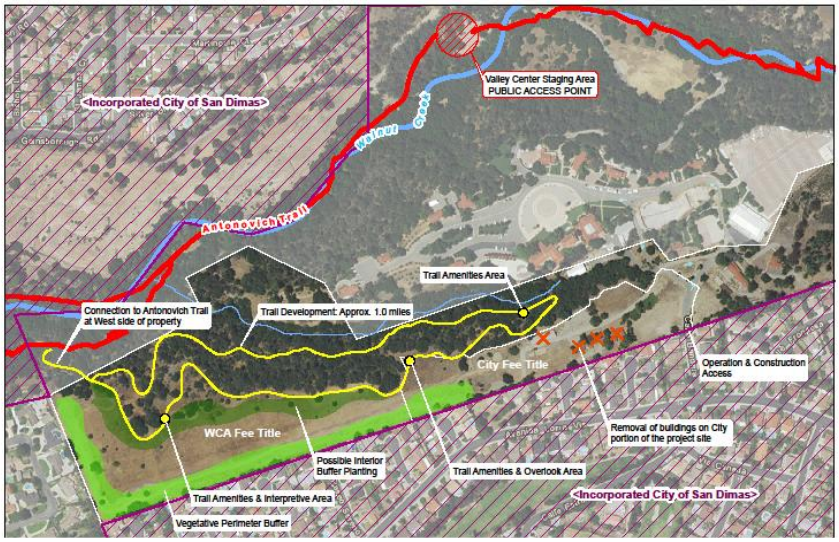
CCLB corps-members hard at work planting over 300 native plants at Parque Dos Rios.

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.

<u>Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space</u>: The City of San Dimas is in the process of completing the remaining items of their RPOSD Prop A grant related to the Trail project. WCA staff has been assisting in the delivery of the final elements for the project. Under a separate WCA-managed Prop A grant staff has designed and had fabricated for this project. Additionally, WCA Staff has designed and had fabricated interpretive, funder dedication, operational, wayfinding, and botanical plant ID plaques and signage.



Dedication plaque to thank funders for making the project possible.



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.

River Ranger Program Implementation Project: WCA and RMC staff conducted our second Advisory Committee meeting on June 2, 2021 where Conservation Corps of Long Beach presented on an overview of the proposed River Ambassador and it was followed by discussion with the committee members. Public safety Coordination was discussed and communication was identified as a key process. The Project Team consisting of WCA and RMC staff and consultants met on June 9th to debrief the Advisory Committee meeting and discussed agenda items for the next Advisory Committee meeting on Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

Meanwhile, the request for qualification (RFQ) was closed on May 20, 2021. Submissions are currently under review. The RFQ is 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). Consultants will be sought 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.