

4.0 PLANNING THE FUTURE

4.1 MISSION STATEMENT

The Watershed Conservation Authority's mission is to facilitate, plan, and develop innovative efforts to enhance watershed resources, education, and access to nature and recreation. Through collaborative partnerships, the Watershed Conservation Authority engages communities and provides vision for healthy watersheds that integrate habitat, open space, recreation, and urban neighborhoods.

4.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Regional Responsiveness**
Reflect and celebrate the special qualities that bring together people and wild places in a crossroads of ecological, economic, and cultural complexity.
- **Integrated and Multifunctional**
Layer multiple functions and uses within green spaces to create integrated network of high-functioning and high value open spaces. Incorporate considerations for hydrology, habitat, streets, creeks, parks, habitat, urban forests, trails, drainage, shorelines, views, commercial and civic spaces, backyards and buildings.
- **Equity and Accessibility**
Provide equitable access for all persons to a variety of outdoor and recreational experiences. Distribute and/or link appropriate open space types to every neighborhood, in order to address the needs of diverse population groups.
- **Connectivity**
Promote and enhance a connected network of open space and recreation that facilitates non-motorized movement, enhances habitat through connectivity, links diverse neighborhoods, and is easy to navigate and understand.
- **Quality, Beauty, Identity, Respite, Rootedness, Livability**
Build on natural and cultural intrinsic qualities of the target area; reflect, respond to and interpret geographic, ecological, aesthetic and cultural contexts; address emotional and spiritual needs; and inspire a deep connection to place.
- **Ecological Function and Integrity**
Design for hydrological and genetic health while enhancing the quantity and quality of natural systems in the target area. Connect to regional ecosystems in order to achieve integrity, resiliency and biodiversity in ecological systems.
- **Public Health and Safety**

Provide multiple opportunities for exercise, physical activity, and a connection to nature to be integrated into daily lives. Continue to work to make the region a healthy and safe place to live with reduced risk of natural hazards (flooding, contaminated water and soil).

▪ **Feasibility, Flexibility, and Stewardship**

Plan for lasting and resilient places with short- and long-term implementation strategies that include complementary public and private investment, are achievable in incremental steps, and adaptable over time. WCA projects and programs should be maintainable, inspiring shared stewardship between public agencies, private businesses, and individual citizens to foster pride, purpose and community.

4.3 CORE VALUES

- Quality Service
- Efficiency
- Creativity and Innovation
- Teamwork
- Inclusiveness and Mutual Respect
- Community Involvement
- Environmental Stewardship

4.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: CREATING HEALTHY WATERSHED FUNCTION
(External)

Objective 1.1: Protect open space for people and wildlife.

The WCA will expand open space protection through planning, development, land acquisition, land use policy, outreach, and advocacy, as well as through support for compatible programs and projects.

Objective 1.2: Restore habitat to promote genetic diversity.

The WCA will implement habitat restoration through planning, development, land acquisition, enhancement, conservation, land use policy, and advocacy, as well as through support for compatible programs and projects.

Objective 1.3: Improve watershed hydrology to support water supply, water quality, flood protection, and ecosystem improvement.

The WCA will promote and build regional green infrastructure improvements that improve watershed hydrology through land acquisition, park improvement and development, greenway development, incorporation of low impact development (LID) measures in park facilities, promoting land use policy changes to incorporate green spaces and LID in new development and redeveloping areas, outreach to local communities, and advocacy.

GOAL 2: PROVIDING THE REGIONAL INFORMATION SOURCE FOR RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
(External)

Objective 2.1: Increase awareness of recreation and education resources and facilities through a regional, web-based portal.

The WCA will create and maintain a web-based information portal or online “kiosk” that builds a WCA internet presence, promotes user interaction and information-sharing, assists in building partnerships, and recruits volunteers, and provides opportunities for outreach and advocacy.

Objective 2.2: Build regional respect for WCA facilities and services.

The WCA will build respect and prestige in the region for its facilities and services through branding, marketing campaigns, linking WCA projects and programs to local communities and facilities, the web-based portal, education and interpretive programming, policy roundtables, outreach, and advocacy.

Objective 2.3: Inspire diverse communities and urban users to enjoy and respect recreation resources and nature in the region.

The WCA will encourage urban users throughout its target area to experience nature and recreation in the region in a manner that protects sensitive natural resources through community outreach, education on watershed resources and responsible behavior and use of natural environments, environmental stewardship, and good communication.

Objective 2.4: Create a research and education institute.

The WCA will establish and build a research and education institute function to inspire the region to support open space and recreation improvements through outreach, education programming, technical and planning research, regional policy roundtables, and legislative advocacy.

GOAL 3: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO RECREATION AND NATURE
(External)

Objective 3.1: Expand public access to existing, improved, and new recreation opportunities.

The WCA will expand public access for diverse communities and urban users to regional recreation opportunities through park planning and design, park construction, operation and maintenance, land use policy, outreach, partnerships, and advocacy.

Objective 3.2: Expand access to nature and natural environments that respects people and nature.

The WCA will expand access to nature and natural environments while improving the interface between people, urban uses, and nature through providing more and better access points, trail planning and design, trail construction, habitat restoration, education and outreach, partnerships, and advocacy.

Objective 3.3: Design and implement a comprehensive environmental interpretation program.

The WCA will plan, design, and build interpretive programming around WCA facilities and important natural, cultural, and other features in the region through new and improved interpretive signage, educational programming, special events, outreach, and partnerships.

GOAL 4: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AGENCY
(External/Internal)

Objective 4.1: Build a diverse short- and long-term funding portfolio.

The WCA will endeavor to identify and build a diverse suite of funding sources to support permanent on-going needs of operations and maintenance, facilities programming, and necessary facility improvements. The portfolio will also consider funding availability to support new project concepts and opportunities as they materialize. The funding portfolio will be built through various sources including, but not limited to the: RMC; State, federal, and foundation grants; corporate and individual sponsorships; conservation and planning services consulting to partners; special uses at park facilities; third-party mitigation programs; donations; fundraising for parks, facilities and programs; lines-of-credit; and an internal revolving grant fund endowment.

Objective 4.2: Expand collaborative partnerships to support WCA parks, projects, and programs.

The WCA will grow financial, technical, and political support of its facilities and projects through: growing its existing partnership with the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) and the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC); supporting and facilitating RMC programs, priorities, and grantee projects; cost-sharing and in-kind support; building Council-of-Government relationships; building new agency and nonprofit partnerships; building and maintaining political support; advocating for projects and partnerships; legislative advocacy/lobbying for project support and funding; utilizing board expertise and political will; sharing resources among agencies and partners; and policy roundtables.

Objective 4.3: Encouraging local community engagement.

The WCA will engage local cities, neighborhoods, and the public to tap support for WCA projects and programs, build partnerships with cities and neighborhoods, recruit volunteers, provide outreach and education, legislative advocacy, and conduct policy roundtables.

Objective 4.4: Build strong relationships with regulatory agencies.

The WCA will build strong relationships with regulatory agencies to: support and facilitate WCA programs, priorities, and RMC grantee projects; encourage cost-sharing and in-kind support; build and maintain political support; advocate for projects and partnerships; advocate/lobby for project support and funding; promote resource sharing among agencies and partners; policy roundtables; and consider land use policy.

Objective 4.5: Create and grow WCA identity and public awareness.

The WCA will grow public awareness of WCA facilities and services through new and improved branding, marketing campaigns, participating in regional planning efforts (sitting at the table), the web-based portal, social media, and perceived effectiveness.

Objective 4.6: Create a friends network of regional non-profit organizations.

The WCA will create a formal network of non-profit “friends” to support WCA facilities, projects, and programs through fundraising, outreach, advocacy, grant partnering, and providing supplemental staff.

Objective 4.7: Establish a new “Friends of the WCA” non-profit organization.

The WCA will plan and get certified with the IRS a new 501c3 nonprofit organization to support WCA functions and collaborative with WCA staff and board including, but not limited to, providing: a fundraising arm of the WCA; services to support WCA parks, projects, programs, and operation and maintenance activities; community outreach and interaction; legislative advocacy; and education and interpretive programs.

GOAL 5: PROMOTING A HEALTHY CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT
(Internal)

Objective 5.1: Ensure responsible management and performance.

The WCA will endeavor to: implement consistently efficient and effective administrative and business practices; promote a business-like approach; create written ethics standards and training; foster a satisfying, healthy, and productive work environment; and provide adequate resources to support staff in achieving a high quality product.

Objective 5.2: Support forward-thinking decision-making.

The WCA will support forward-thinking decision-making by providing vision for the agency, commitment to the best projects possible, taking on some risk, promoting sustainable practices, and growing a high quality reputation.

Objective 5.3: Recruit and retain top quality staff.

The WCA will strive to hire and retain a diverse, high quality work force that provides a broad skill set, flexibility, collaboration, effectiveness, and efficiency.

The WCA will also strive to provide education, cross-training, and succession planning to ensure ongoing success of the organization when loss of staff occurs.