

DATE: January 17, 2019

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: WCA Staff

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 10: 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 1/08/19

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 WCA. Bills can be tracked on the legislative website: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

CLIMATE CHANGE

AB 65 (Petrie-Norris D) Coastal Protection: Climate Adaptation Project Prioritization

Introduced: 12/3/2018, **Status:** Waiting for committee assignment

Summary: The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018, approved by the voters at the June 5, 2018, statewide primary direct election as Proposition 68, authorizes the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$4,000,000,000 for financing a drought, water, parks, climate, coastal protection, and outdoor access for all program. The act authorizes, upon appropriation by the Legislature, \$40,000,000 of those bond funds for projects that assist coastal communities, including those reliant on commercial fisheries, with adaptation to climate change, including projects that address ocean acidification, sea level rise, or habitat restoration and protection, among other things. Among other items, this bill would require specified things of the State Coastal Conservancy when it allocates any funding appropriated pursuant to the act, including that it prioritize projects that use natural infrastructure to help adapt to climate change.

Hence, for possible collaborative projects between WCA and the State Coastal Conservancy subject to the \$40 million contained in Proposition 68 for the conservancy, projects must incorporate natural infrastructure such as earthen embankment and shoring, raised or elevated trail improvements to avoid sea level rise and inundation.

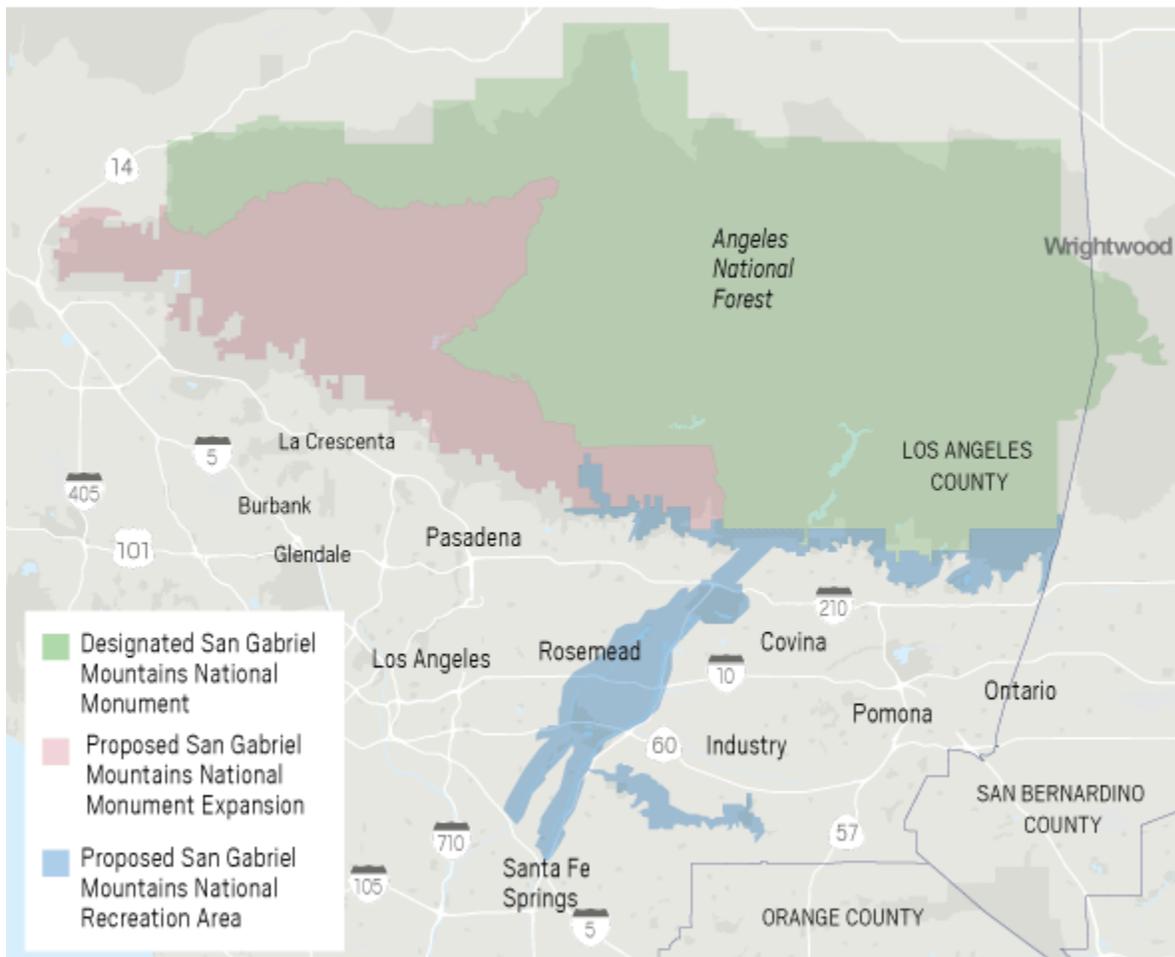
SB 45 (Allen D) Wildfire, Drought, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020**Introduced:** 12/3/2018, **Status:** Waiting for committee assignment

Summary: This bill would enact the Wildfire, Drought, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in an unspecified amount pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects to 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.

The author's office describes this bill as a follow up to last year's SB 1015 (Allen), an effort to create a program to underwrite climate resiliency and adaption with the state's ten conservancies including the RMC.

PROJECTS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

San Gabriel National Monument: In December 2018, Senator Kamala Harris introduced legislation to expand wilderness and monument status in the Angeles National Forest, and to create a National Recreation Area to the south of the National Monument to support local parks in the San Gabriel Valley (see map below).



Source: Rep. Judy Chu

JEFF GOERTZEN, SCNG

The *San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and River Protection Act* would:

- Expand the boundaries of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument to include the western areas of the Angeles National Forest, bringing its westmost point near Santa Clarita.
- Establish a new National Recreation Area to allow resources to flow into the region and increase recreational opportunities for the surrounding communities.
- Designate portions of the San Gabriel Mountains area as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System and the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This would expand protections for the existing Sheep Mountain Wilderness and San Gabriel Wilderness zones, and to two would-be designated areas.

The expanded boundary would include some of the most precious and popular areas of the San Gabriel Mountains including the front ranges of the San Gabriel Mountains and portions of the upper watershed of the Los Angeles River, to include sites such as Mt. Wilson, Chantry Flats, and Arroyo Seco.

Additionally, the legislation envisions 51,107 acres for a San Gabriel River National Recreation Area (that would be run by the National Park Service) and would expand outdoor recreation opportunities and protect habitat and wildlife along the San Gabriel Mountain foothills and San Gabriel River. The bill calls for designating the natural parts of the San Gabriel River as a “wild and scenic” river as well. The bill introduced by Senator Harris (Bill 3704) merges two existing bills that were introduced by Rep. Chu in 2017 and is seen to be more favorable to pass the Senate in the new Congress.

Forest Service released the Final version of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Plan and Land Management Plan amendment on April 20th, 2018, initiating the 45-day Objection Period. A 45-day Objection resolution period (where changes would be incorporated into the final EIS) was extended through September 2018 due to delays caused by fire season and changing of FS staff. According to Forest Service’s Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA), a Record of Decision (ROD) was expected on the Monument Plan in October of 2018. It’s unclear at this time (because of the government shutdown) if a ROD was signed.

The San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative (SGMCC) held its last meeting on November 29, 2018. The Collaborative met with the new Forest Supervisor Jerry Perez and heard updates from Forest Service. The Collaborative also received updates from the ad hoc subcommittees on their Work Plans for 2019 and seeks to identify opportunities to further align Forest Service projects with nexus with cross-cutting Collaborative priorities. *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. The next meeting will be hosted on January 24th and occur every other month.*

Strategic Plan 2019: Staff will be participating in an upcoming Strategic Visioning Session exercise involving creative activities and discussions geared toward brainstorming a work program direction for the authority identifying opportunities, affirming our vision, refining goals and objectives and generally starting the process to set a course for the next 3 to 5 years.

WCA PROJECTS & PROPERTIES

Duck Farm Project: Project team is finalizing schedule of values with General Contractor to enter into agreement to construct the project which was authorized by the Board at the October 2018 meeting. Los Angeles County Regional Planning completed their Site Plan reapproval which was provided to LA County Building and Safety’s Grading section for use in their approval of the grading permit. WCA received certification from the State of California this month to finalize the RMC’s gap funding award of \$1.2 Million to complete construction.



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

Duck Farm House Landscape and Water Project: Staff will prepare a design & build RFP to forward the implementation of the Project in the coming months. Additionally, staff will draft grant application(s) for proposition 68 funds in Spring/Summer 2019, as call for projects come available, to complete the funding need for the project which includes exterior building renovations and potential small indoor resource visitor center.



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. Images above show an aerial view of the project site and a concept illustration of strategies.

San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network: WCA has entered into agreement with LA County Flood Control District to begin Phase I (Master Plan Development) for the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network. The LACFCD requires detailed Task Orders to issue a Notice to Proceed. WCA is currently in conversation with

San Gabriel Mountain Foothills Acquisition Opportunities: WCA staff is currently applying some elements of the in-progress plan to pursue acquisitions in the foothills. Limited staff capacity at project partner Trust for Public Land has delayed finalization of the draft report, although TPL has continued to advise on acquisition prioritization and processes. WCA plans to meet with TPL in the next month to schedule and advance next steps and will report updates in the next Liaison and Activities Report.

The RMC grant funding the Master Plan also supports acquisition activities including negotiation, legal counsel, due diligence review, and procurement of reports including appraisals and title review. WCA, in consultation with TPL has planned to acquire recreation and habitat open space from the Glendora Community Conservancy totaling over 600 acres in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains above Glendora. These lands are anticipated to be transferred to WCA in January and March of 2019.

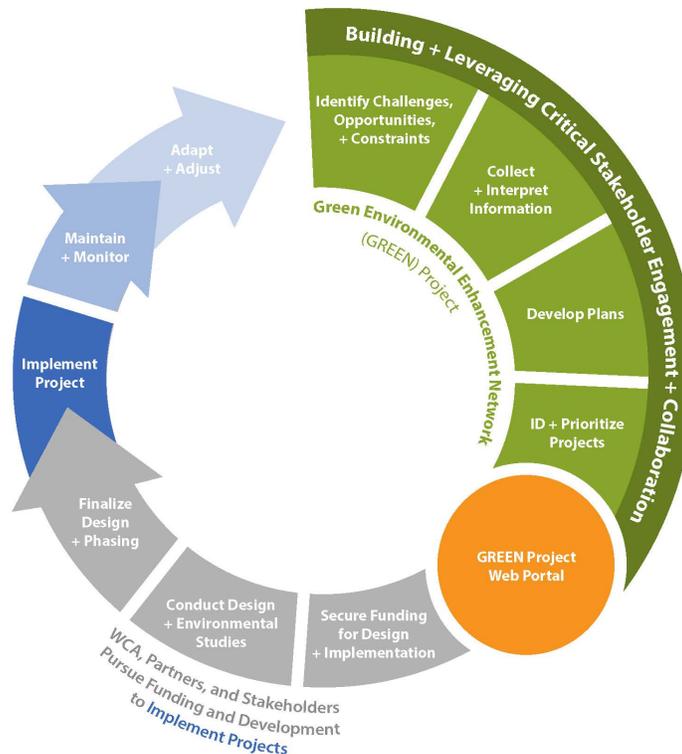
San Gabriel Mountains Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan Project, will develop a comprehensive prioritized acquisition strategy and a recommended resource management and operations strategy to preserve critical habitat and open space, improve watershed health and increase public access for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

Lower Los Angeles River – Implementation Advisory Group: The Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) will hold its next quarterly meeting on February 20, 2019 at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works headquarters in the City of Alhambra. WCA, a member of the Public Realm, Water, Environment, and Infrastructure Subcommittee has been requested to present the Parque Dos Rios project as a pilot presentation with a goal of modeling how the committee will engage project proponents in discussions. The presentation will be 15-30 minutes in length with Q&A afterwards.

The IAG provides a public venue for discussion of proposed projects/programs related to the Lower LA River; ensure proposed projects/programs are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan; and maximize multi-use opportunities and community benefits by encouraging collaboration among the many project proponents and organizations in the project area. In its role as an advisory body, the IAG will provide guidance on issues presented before them, but ultimately, individual entities with jurisdiction along the river corridor including the LA County Flood Control District, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the cities will continue to have decision-making authority. The IAG members and sub-committees will work together to further define the roles and guidelines of the IAG in the upcoming months. The IAG includes sub-committees for: Programs/ Policies & Community Engagement; Public Realm, Environment, Water, Infrastructure; Public Advisory; and Future Committee TBD (as-needed).

GREEN Project: WCA staff has been developing the functionality and structure of the GREEN project portal in conjunction with the content of the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan, which relies on the GREEN portal structure. Most recently the Authority has been working towards consistent visual design elements on the site as part of a closeout of a web design consultant's work. Future additional web mapping consultants have been considered for the next iteration of the portal.

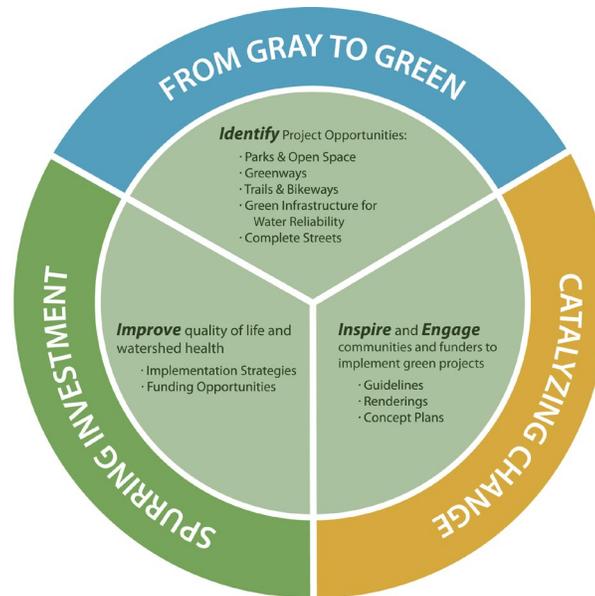
Staff continues to use GREEN Project funding to support the coordination of existing and future urban greening projects among stakeholders and project proponents in WCA's jurisdiction.



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

Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan: Conceptual design and imagery for the Greenscape tool is underway with all 12 greenscapes in production. Staff are currently drafting and uploading written and visual content to the GREEN portal website. Additionally, the results of mapping analysis from CalPoly Consultant Dr. Lee and internally generated are received and being reviewed for inclusion in the targeted soft launch slated for Spring 2018. These data products will be incorporated into siting analysis for urban greening strategies and for a series of priority routing networks for stormwater management strategies. The design and development of the web portal is also ongoing in coordination with consultants who are expected to complete work in February. Staff is in the process of scheduling meetings with city representatives to workshop how the deliverable would be most useful to them and solicit project information to include on the site. The completed content will be the final deliverable for the plan.

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held April 16th 2019. In addition to targeted stakeholder outreach, WCA will present the Gateway Greening Project to sub-committee meetings of the Lower LA River Implementation Advisory Group in January 2019.



With a grant from the Strategic Growth Council 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 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.

Mt. Baldy Wilderness Preserve: The Eagle Scout project, to install kiosk and Dedication sign, is tentatively scheduled for January 26th pending weather conditions. The project must be completed by March 1, 2019 to fulfill the requirements of the Eagle Scout program. Site enhancements include the permanent installation of the Mt. Baldy Preserve dedication sign surrounded by native plants, as well as, construction of an educational kiosk for site specific displayed material. A separate Convert-a-Can event is scheduled for February, pending weather.

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 preserved is in its undeveloped state. The site is publicly accessible for passive recreational use.

Crystal Lake Redevelopment and San Gabriel Canyon Master Planning: After completing the collection of existing resources and data, the Crystal Lake project team, including US Forest Services, WCA, BlueGreen, and other consultants held the first major stakeholder meetings in November 2018. These meetings at Angeles National Forest Headquarters and WCA presented existing conditions and engaged stakeholders to identify opportunity areas. With existing data collection complete and outreach ongoing, including user surveys, the team is also moving forward with analysis to better understand the lake water dynamics.

The current partial shutdown of the US Government has impacted the Forest Service and Angeles National Forest severely. The project is currently progressing more slowly while the project team is furloughed.

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.

River Wilderness Park: California Conservation Corps began early site preparation work for the overlook as a requirement of their ATP funding for the project. In December, crews cleared debris and non-native materials from the project site location. Staff is working with the City, Caltrans and Design team to restart and complete the design packages for the overlook and park entry improvement elements of the park. Preliminary feedback, is that Caltrans initial staff selections for ATP projects for Cycle 4 does not include the roundabout project. There is one more opportunity to be chosen through SCAG but the outlook is not promising at this stage for funding to be awarded for this work. To date, \$2,752,860 of the estimated cost of \$6,495,000 has been secured. Staff will prepare Prop 68 grant applications and will pursue other grant opportunities for which the project can be competitive.



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: The recording of the Final certified EIR was completed in October 2018 and project is in the process of being closed out. U.S. Forest Service will post the final EIS to the Federal Register on March 2019. A decision on the project is expected Spring 2019. Items 21 -23 on today's agenda are related to this project's current status.

overlook, shade structure, seating and interpretive graphics. The land will be planted with natives and a raptor perch installed.

Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space: Landscape designers BlueGreen received their Notice to Proceed at a pre-design meeting held January 10th, 2019. The designs are expected about six weeks after the contract is executed. Meanwhile, the City of San Dimas held a bid day December 20th, 2018 and awarded trail construction in early January. Once the design is complete, the City is expected to implement landscaping while trail construction is ongoing.

WALNUT CREEK – WEST PHASE ONLY

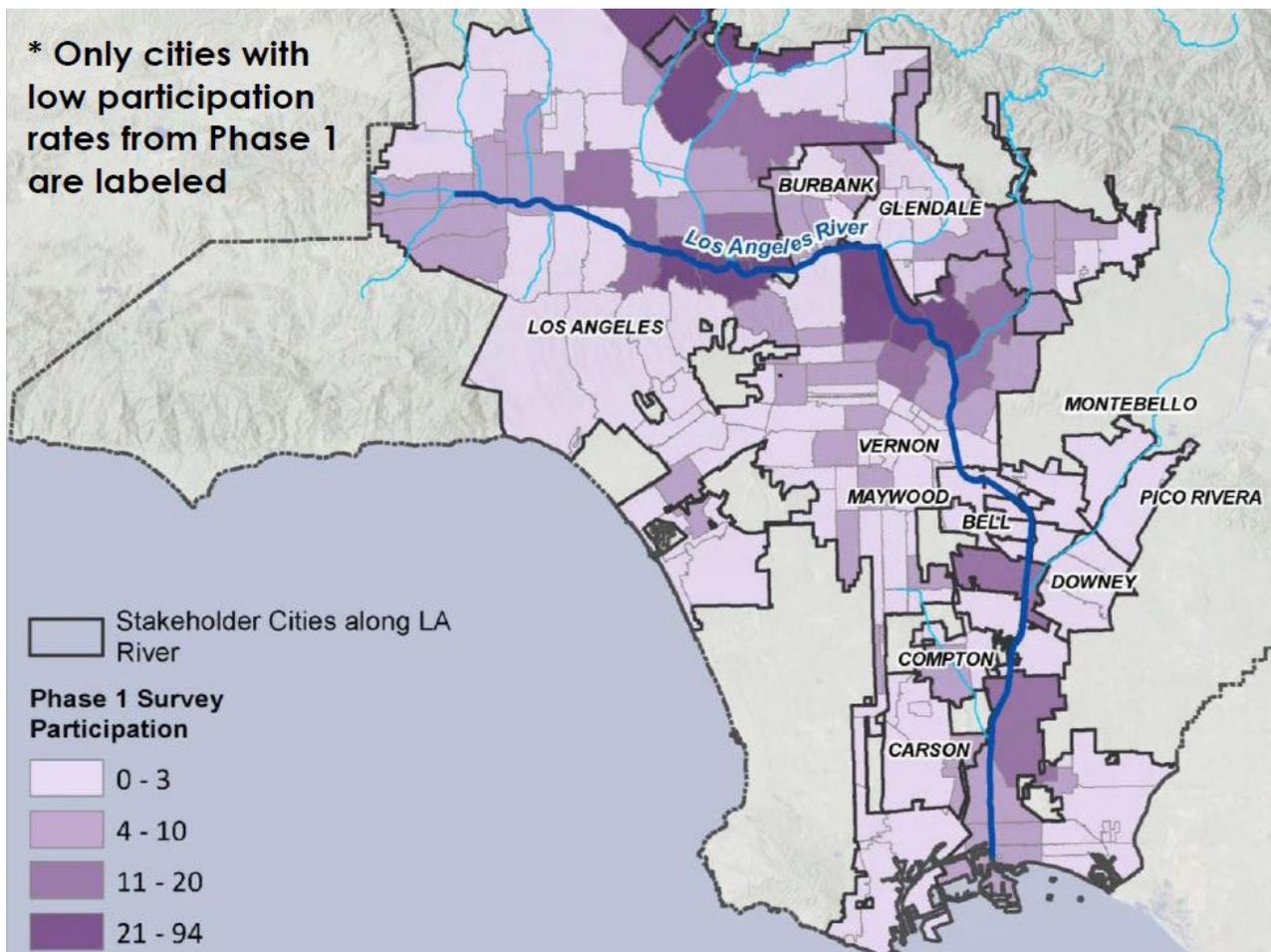


Acquired in 2008, the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space Property is a total of approx. 60.8 acres. The location is directly east of Bonelli Regional Park and along the Walnut Creek riparian corridor. Approximately 6.7 acres are owned by the City of San Dimas and 54 acres are owned by the WCA.

After completing a conceptual development plan in coordination with the 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 site clean-up, trail development and amenities (interpretive signage, benches, etc.) for a looped spur trail, habitat enhancements, and the planting of a vegetated buffer for neighbors. This will realize the improvements necessary to provide public access over a portion of the Project Site through the Antonovich Trail, accessible from four nearby County-operated trail staging areas.

River Ranger Program Implementation Project: Since the WCA approved the project on October 15, 2018, WCA has contracted with Placeworks as the main consultant to complete the River Ranger Plan by March 30, 2019. WCA has also contracted with several Non-profit organizations to conduct public outreach about the program, including Mujeres de la Tierra, Amigos de los Rios, From Lot to Spot, and Trails 4 All. A Stakeholder Meeting with attendees from LA River and Tributaries adjacent cities and Non-profit partners occurred on December 6, 2018, and the WCA received feedback on the type of programming stakeholders would like to see along the river. The next step of the planning process is to incorporate community and stakeholder feedback into the Plan.

River Ranger Phase 2 Outreach Priority Areas



These are the target cities for Phase 2 Outreach conducted by Non-profit partners to increase the number of community responses to the River Ranger Program, such as what is the role of a River Ranger, what are some of their safety concerns, and how do they recreate in the River currently.