

**DATE:** May 16, 2019

**TO:** Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

**FROM:** WCA Staff

**THROUGH:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Item 08: Liaison and Activities Report

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## 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 4/29/19**

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/>

### **PARKS AND WATER**

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

**Introduced:** 1/14/2019, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File

**Summary:** This bill is a reintroduction of last year's AB 2534. 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 students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, foster youth, or pupils of limited English proficiency, as provided.

To the extent that the skill sets of persons retained through the River Rangers Program includes interpretative/naturalist aptitudes, the program envisioned in this bill may underwrite these positions.

#### **AB 217 (Garcia, Eduardo D) Safe Drinking Water for All Act**

**Introduced:** 1/16/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 3/28/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** Would enact the Safe Drinking Water for All Act and would establish the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund in the State Treasury and would provide that moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the board to provide a source of funding to secure access to safe drinking water for all Californians, while also ensuring the long-term sustainability of drinking water service and infrastructure. This bill and a companion measure, SB 200, reflect a priority articulated by Governor Newsom in his 2019-20

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Budget and in his state of the state, implementing a sustainable funding source to address deficient water systems.

### **AB 556 (Carrillo D) Outdoor Experiences: Community Access Program: Grant Program**

**Introduced:** 2/13/2019, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File

**Summary:** This bill would require the Natural Resources Agency to develop and implement a community access program focused on engagement programs, technical assistance, or facilities that maximize safe and equitable physical admittance, especially for low-income and disadvantaged communities, to natural or cultural resources community education programs, or recreational amenities. Authorizes the agency to develop a grant program for innovative transportation projects that provide disadvantaged and low-income youth with access to outdoor experiences. Given that, in the aggregate, more than 40% of the households within WCA's jurisdictional scope are disadvantaged, this bill represents a terrific opportunity to enhance programming opportunities.

### **AB 933 (Petrie-Norris D) Ecosystem Resilience: Watershed Protection: Watershed Coordinators**

**Introduced:** 2/20/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/1/2019, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File

**Summary:** Would authorize the Department of Conservation, to the extent funds are available, to establish and administer the Ecosystem Resilience Program to fund watershed coordinator positions, and other necessary costs, throughout the state for the purpose of achieving specified goals, including the goal of developing and implementing watershed improvement plans aligned with multiple statewide and regional objectives across distinct bioregions. The bill would authorize the department to develop performance measures and accountability controls to track progress and outcomes.

### **AB 968 (Garcia, Cristina D) Naturalist Pathway Pilot Program**

**Introduced:** 2/21/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/9/2019, **Status:** Set for hearing in Assembly Higher Education Committee. Hearing canceled at request of author

**Summary:** Would, on or before the start of the 2020–21 academic year, require the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to develop and implement a pilot program, at a voluntarily participating community college located in a disadvantaged community, that provides a pathway for participating students to become naturalists and achieve careers providing public access to, or preserving, restoring, or enhancing outdoor areas. The bill would require the chancellor to submit a report on the pilot program to the Legislature on or before July 1, 2024 and would repeal the pilot program on July 1, 2025. This bill has become a two-year bill.

### **AB 1111 (Friedman D) Office of Outdoor Recreation: California Outdoor Recreation Account**

**Introduced:** 2/21/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 3/18/2019, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File

**Summary:** This bill replicates the language contained in last year's vetoed AB 1918 and would establish the Office of Outdoor Recreation in state government. The bill would require the office to undertake certain activities, including supporting the outdoor recreation economy of the state by engaging in specified activities. The bill would also require the office to create an advisory committee to provide advice, expertise, support, and service to the office. Given that outdoor participation rates in California pale in comparison to those in neighboring states, this bill among other things, heightens the focus of exploring practices and policies that generate greater outdoor use.

**AB 1269 (Rubio, Blanca D) Park Property: City of El Monte: Pioneer Park**

**Introduced:** 2/21/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/9/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** Would authorize the City of El Monte to sell or dispose of specified park property, in whole or in part, for transit-oriented development, as defined, as long as specified conditions are satisfied, including that the city adopts a park relocation ordinance and approves a public park development plan and a park relocation budget. The bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation to approve these items, as provided.

**AB 1549 (O'Donnell D) Wildlife: Deer: Santa Catalina Island: Report**

**Introduced:** 2/22/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 3/21/2019, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File

**Summary:** Existing law requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to biennially report to the Legislature and Fish and Game Commission on the progress made toward restoration and maintenance of California's deer herds. This bill would require the department to develop by 1/2/2022, a report, in consultation with state agencies, local governments, federal agencies, NGO's, landowners, and scientific agencies to inform and coordinate management decisions regarding deer on Santa Catalina Island, including historic, current and future deer population on the island and assessment of their overall health.

**AB 1694 (O'Donnell D) San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy: Territory: Dominguez Channel Watershed and Santa Catalina Island**

**Introduced:** 2/22/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 3/28/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** This bill would add the Dominguez Channel watershed and Santa Catalina Island to the territory of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. AB 1694 seeks to bring the numerous benefits of the RMC to the Dominguez Channel Watershed and the Santa Catalina Island. This will expand the reach of RMC's funding and expertise to many traditionally underserved communities with unique open space and water management challenges.

**ACR 69 (Garcia, Eduardo D) "Parks Make Life Better!" Month**

**Introduced:** 4/9/2019, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Rules Committee

This measure would recognize the importance of access to local parks, trails, open space, and facilities for the health, wellness, development, inspiration, and safety of all Californians and would declare the month of July 2019 as "Parks Make Life Better!" ® Month.

**SB 226 (Nielsen R) Watershed Restoration: Wildfires: Grant Program**

**Introduced:** 2/7/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 3/18/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Senate Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** Current law authorizes the Natural Resources Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency to jointly develop and submit to the Legislature a plan for forest and water restoration investments for the drainages that supply specified reservoirs. This bill would require the agency to develop and implement a watershed restoration grant program, as provided, for purposes of awarding grants to eligible counties to assist them with watershed restoration on watersheds that have been affected by wildfire. The bill would require an eligible county receiving funds pursuant to the grant program to submit

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an annual report to the agency regarding projects funded by the grant program. Bill would provide that projects funded by the watershed restoration grant program are not subject to the requirements of CEQA. This bill appropriates \$75 million from the General Fund to the Natural Resources Agency for implementation of the grant program.

### **SB 367 (Hueso D) State Coastal Conservancy: Grants: Educational Projects and Programs**

**Introduced:** 2/20/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/22/2019, **Status:** Referred to Senate Floor

**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 404 (Chang R) State Parks: Chino Hills State Park: Expansion**

**Introduced:** 2/20/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/2/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Senate Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** Under current law, the Department of Parks and Recreation controls the state park system, which is made up of units, one of which is the Chino Hills State Park. This bill would require the department to provide all necessary assistance for the state's acquisition and acceptance of four specified parcels from willing sellers that are adjacent to the Chino Hills State Park. Would require the department to agree to accept and manage each parcel as it is acquired with specified funds as part of the Chino Hills State Parks, and to expedite development of a management plan for the parcels once acquired.

### **SB 462 (Stern D) Community Colleges: Forestland Restoration Workforce Program**

**Introduced:** 2/21/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Senate Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** Requires the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges, working in collaboration with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, to establish a model curriculum for a forestland restoration workforce program that could be offered at campuses of the California Community Colleges. The bill would require the chancellor's office to distribute the model curriculum to community college districts no later than January 1, 2021, with the goal of enabling interested community college districts to offer the course to students beginning with the 2021–22 academic year. This bill contains other related provisions.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

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

**Introduced:** 12/3/2018, **Last Amended Date:** 3/18/2019, **Status:** On the Assembly floor

**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 the purpose of financing a drought, water, parks, climate, coastal protection, and outdoor access for all program. The act authorizes, upon

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appropriation by the Legislature, \$40,000,000 of those bond funds for projects that assist coastal communities, including those reliant on commercial fisheries, with adaption 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 prioritizes 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 so as to avoid sea level rise and inundation.

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

**Introduced:** 1/28/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/2/2019, **Status:** Passed Assembly Appropriations. To Consent Calendar

**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 352 (Garcia, Eduardo D) California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: Investment Plan: Transformative Climate Communities Program**

**Introduced:** 2/4/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 3/14/2019, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File

**Summary:** Would, beginning July 1, 2020, require state agencies administering competitive grant programs that allocate moneys from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to give specified communities preferential points during grant application scoring for programs intended to improve air quality, to include a specified application timeline, to allow applicants from the Counties of Imperial and San Diego to include daytime population numbers in grant applications, and to prohibit grant eligibility and scoring criteria from precluding low-income communities from applying for or being awarded a grant. This bill would include "community access" as a potential co-benefit when scoring GGRF grant applications.

### **AB 382 (Mathis R) Integrated Regional Water Management Plans: Grant Funding: Upper Watershed Health**

**Introduced:** 2/5/2019, **Status:** Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File

**Summary:** Current law provides that an integrated regional water management plan is eligible for funding allocated specifically for implementation of integrated regional water management. Current law requires certain state agencies to include in any set of criteria used to select projects and programs for funding, a criterion that provides a preference for regional projects or programs. This bill would require the Department of Water Resources to include in any criteria used to select a project or program for grant funding authorized on or after January 1, 2020 a criterion that provides a preference for a regional water management group undertaking a project improving upper watershed health upstream and outside of the defined geographical area covered by the group's plan. The bill, if consistent with a general obligation bond act providing grant funding authorized on or after January 1, 2020, would require a group to contribute a lower amount of matching funds as a local cost share for a project that improves upper watershed health upstream and outside of the defined geographical area covered by the group's plan.

**AB 552 (Stone D) Coastal Resources: Coastal Adaptation: Access, and Resilience Program**

**Introduced:** 2/13/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/22/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** Would establish the Coastal Adaptation, Access, and Resilience Program 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 Adaptation, Access, and Resilience 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.

**SB 45 (Allen D) Wildfire, Drought, and Flood Protection Act of 2020**

**Introduced:** 12/3/2018, **Last Amended Date:** 4/4/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Senate Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** 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 the amount of \$4,300,000,000 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. There is a specific category contained in the bond that is LA River specific.

**SB 576 (Umber D) State Coastal Conservancy: Coastal Climate Change Adaptation, Infrastructure, and Readiness Program**

**Introduced:** 2/22/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/23/2019, **Status:** Re-referred to Senate Appropriations Committee

**Summary:** Would require the State Coastal Conservancy to develop and implement a coastal climate adaptation, infrastructure, and readiness program designed to, among other things, improve the climate change resiliency of the state's coastal communities, infrastructure, and habitat, as prescribed, and participate in, facilitate or host an international conference on coastal climate change not less than once every 2 years.

## **PROJECTS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST**

**San Gabriel Mountains National Monument:** Staff continues to monitor and engage with the Forest Service on the release of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Plan and Land Management Plan amendment. The U.S. Forest Service plan prioritizes environmental protection over economic development and, in some cases, recreational access — limiting overnight camping along certain popular rivers and streams because of its ecological toll. The plan comes four years after President Obama established the monument.

The new document recommends that the monument collaborate with local, state and federal agencies, as well as volunteer groups, in an enforcement campaign to document and eliminate unauthorized mining activities. The plan recognizes the need to control the heavy crowds of urban visitors to the forest. "On any

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given weekend, a two-mile stretch of the East Fork of the San Gabriel River, about 15 miles north of Azusa, and the Switzer picnic area, only seven miles from La Cañada Flintridge, are as crowded as Southern California beaches. Most visitors arrive by car on California 39, the winding mountain highway that provides the only access to Crystal Lake and other recreational areas north of the East Fork”, wrote Louis Sahagun, reporter for the Los Angeles Times.

**San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative:** The San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative (SGMCC) held its last meeting on Thursday March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019, from 9am-1pm, at the Altadena Community Center. The collaborative continues to work on challenges faced by the forest regarding community access, visitor management, and protection of natural resources.

*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. Meeting occur every other month.*

## **WCA PROJECTS & PROPERTIES**

**Duck Farm Project:** A Groundbreaking Ceremony was held on March 21<sup>st</sup> at the project site along the San Gabriel River at the future river overlook. LA County First District Supervisor Solis was the featured speaker to mark the milestone and celebrate the eventful day. Speakers included Dan Arrighi (WCA Governing Board Member), Chief Deputy Director Norma E. Garcia (LA County Parks and Recreation), and Director Mark Pestrella. Joan Licari (The Sierra Club) and Sam Pedroza (City of Industry) paid tribute to Sierra Club Member, and their friend Jeff Yann as the “Man with a Vision for a River Park”. The Yann family, members of the Sierra Club, representatives from adjacent cities, agencies and the public were in attendance. The event was very well attended, and everyone had a good time reminiscing and dreaming about this soon to be new jewel along the Emerald Necklace.

Demolition and earth work have begun on site. Construction is currently scheduled to last seven months.



Groundbreaking Day at the Duck Farm River Park (left to right: Norma E. Garcia, Mark Stanley, Dan Arrighi, Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Yann, Mark Pestrella, Debbie Enos, Joan Licari, and Sam Pedroza) March 21, 2019.

**Duck Farm River Park**  
**Groundbreaking!**  
March 21, 2019

Thank You to Our Funders!

Watershed Conservation Authority  
San Joaquin Hills  
California State Parks  
www.wca.ca.gov



The Yann Family.



WCA receiving a commemorative scroll marking the event.



WCA and RMC Staff with Supervisor Solis

# Duck Farm River Park Making It Happen!



Riparian Area



River Overlook



East Entry Plaza

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:** WCA staff met with County of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation to discuss the potential for Parks to take over future operations of both the Duck Farm and the Duck Farm House. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, WCA staff gave Parks a tour of the Duck Farm House to review conditions and discuss future programming. WCA staff will continue to consult with Parks on programmatic elements to inform the development of the design build RFP for the project, currently in progress. WCA was not selected for a grant from the California Natural Resources Agency—Cultural, Community, and Natural Resources Grant program—to fund the renovation of the farmhouse. However, WCA is continuing to pursue other funding opportunities, including from Prop 68 and Measure A.

In April, WCA continued its initial community outreach as part of the Sanitation District’s Earth Day event. Staff solicited feedback from community members about the kinds of activities they would like to do at the renovated Farmhouse.





*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. The Farmhouse will be renovated and transformed into a community resource / visitor center to compliment these conservation gardens and provide additional programming opportunities.*

**San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network:** WCA is continuing to work with LACFCD to refine the Task Order submitted in February 2019, as needed. Staff anticipates the review of a proposed work outline from Los Angeles County Flood Control District prior to the end of May.

**Emerald Necklace:** On May 2, 2019, Supervisor Hilda Solis’s office hosted an Emerald Necklace meeting to discuss the forwarding of priority projects. The meeting was attended by staff from the Supervisor’s office, various Los Angeles County agencies, and non-profit partners. WCA staff updated attendees on the Duck Farm project, as well as notified them of upcoming potential opportunities for grant funding. The team meeting was the second of an ongoing discussion on forwarding Emerald Necklace priority projects. Meetings take place every other month.

# EMERALD NECKLACE

## FEASIBILITY STUDY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - PHASE I

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

### Westside Multi-Use Trail:

#### A Trail for All User Groups

The partnership of the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo watersheds along the Emerald Necklace provides a unique opportunity to create a trail system that connects the Westside Multi-Use Trail to the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo.

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

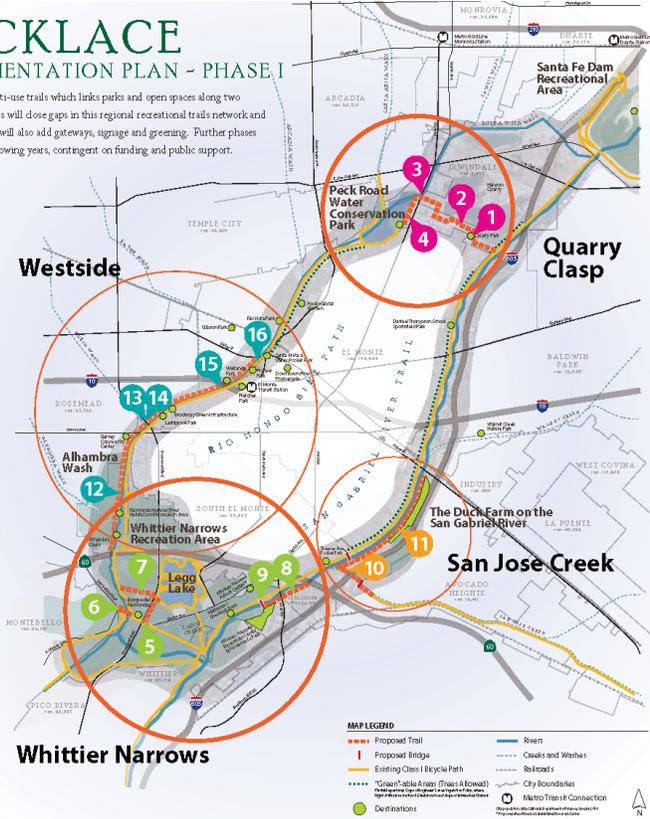
### Whittier Narrows Connectivity:

#### Linking Existing Park Resources

This section of the Emerald Necklace connects the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area to the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo. The trail system will connect the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area to the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo.

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

### PROJECT COMPONENTS



### Quarry Clasp:

Completing the Loop  
Multi-Use Trail connecting Peck Road Water Conservation Park to the San Gabriel River will connect the trail between the Quarry Clasp and the Peck Road and the San Gabriel River.

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

### San Jose Creek Regional Access:

Connecting Communities East of the San Gabriel River  
This section of the Emerald Necklace connects the San Jose Creek Trail to the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo.

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



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 Mountain Foothills Acquisition Opportunities:

WCA continues to pursue acquisition of properties mentioned in this proposal, as well as other contiguous parcels that offer high conservation value or strategic access points.

Appraisal, due diligence, and negotiations for access are underway for Parcel 001 “Vasquez Overlook”, which abuts the newly acquired Parcel 009 “WCA’s Vasquez”. Application for funding to purchase Parcel 001 “Vasquez Overlook” may be pursued in conjunction with land management planning for an open space parcel of nearly 200 acres that is contiguous to Parcel 009 “WCA’s Vasquez” and managed by the Azusa-RMC JPA.

Final Transfer documents for the 128-acre Easley Canyon property (a donation the Board accepted in January 2019) have been submitted to San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy (SGMRC), however, the donation of the Colby parcel (accepted by the Board in March 2019) may be withdrawn by SGMRC due to management considerations pertaining to the endangered *Brodiaea filifolia*.

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Due diligence for the Bluebird which was also offered by Glendora Community Conservancy has uncovered circumstances that merit careful consideration, and the donor of this parcel may choose instead to donate the land to Wildlife Conservation Board, also due to management considerations pertaining to the endangered *Brodiaea filifolia*.

Project partner Trust for Public Land (TPL) has provided first drafts of a San Gabriel Mountain Foothills Acquisition Master Plan report and accompanying data. WCA has given input to shape the usefulness of this data in prioritizing of future land acquisitions, as well as to document the conservation value of priority parcels in future proposals for acquisition funding.

*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 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.*

**Roberts Canyon Acquisition:** WCA is funded through a Rivers and Mountains Conservancy grant to conduct due diligence for the potential acquisition of the properties collectively known as Roberts Canyon. The target property is located adjacent to WCA's River Wilderness Park and within the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains near the vicinity of Roberts Canyon in the city of Azusa. It surrounds the single-family residential development known as the Mountain Cove Community. It includes predominantly steep rocky slopes as well as the opening of the wet-season creek in the mouth of the canyon. Characterized as chaparral, the approximately 130 acres of open space is dominated by undisturbed areas of laurel sumac and Mexican elderberry. Also located on the property are areas of riparian and oak woodland habitat

WCA staff is engaged in an analysis of the property to determine the natural resources benefit to Authority or like agencies. Consideration has included the assessment of the physical state of the property, the property's ownership history, review of a recent preliminary title report, discussion with the adjacent home owners' association, and an evaluation of the benefit of the property to advance the conservation and recreation goals of the agency.

Early results of the analysis indicate the property is at very low risk of development, as it has no public ingress or egress and is very steep. The adjacent parcels are either already developed, as in the case of Mountain Cove, are part of the publicly-owned San Gabriel River wash, or are part of US Forest Service territory. The site's potential to increase public open space recreation opportunities is also limited. The terrain connecting the parcels to future River Wilderness Park area is rough and steeply perched above the San Gabriel River. The purpose of such a proposed trail would be to connect the public to the interior of Robert's Canyon, which tightly hugs the existing residential development and to which the HOA is opposed. The acquisition, especially if improvements are made, will expose the agency to liability in the event of a fire or debris slide, anthropogenic or otherwise. This risk is increased by the large and active collection of persons encamped along the south-west property line.

Further study of the acquisition property is expected to be minimal. WCA staff will confer with legal counsel and then issue a report documenting the body of due diligence material collected and a recommendation to accept or to refuse the donation.

WCA is continuing to explore collaboration on a conservation easement with the current owner. WCA has requested that Lennar Corporation consider two scenarios, which would benefit both Lennar as well as WCA, without exposing a public agency to unnecessary risks or expenses: 1) Lennar Corporation conveys

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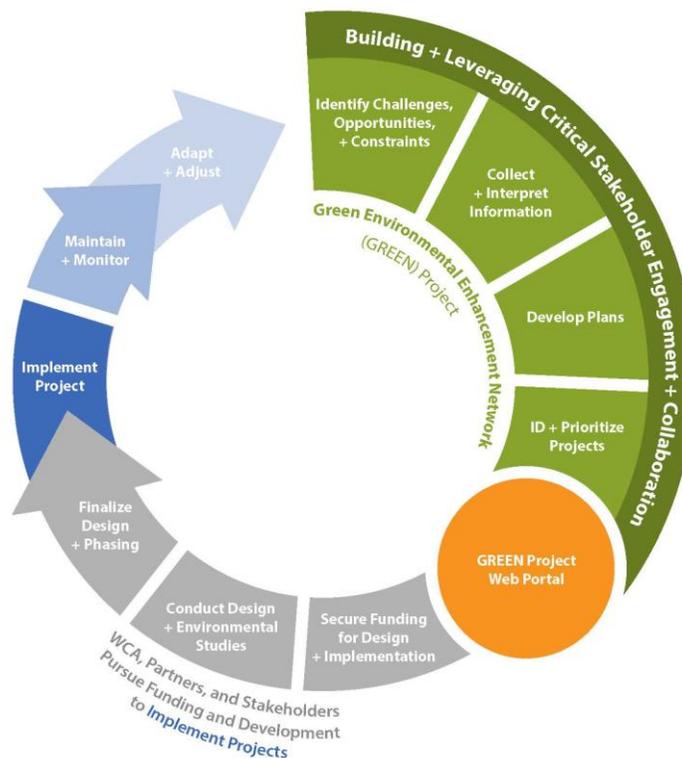
a conservation easement to WCA but holds the fee OR 2) WCA accepts the fee and is given an indemnity by Lennar Corporation should a landslide occur in the future. Discussion of these options is not meant to preclude WCA's acceptance of the donation. WCA is waiting to hear feedback on this approach from Lennar Corporation.

**Vasquez Acquisition:** In March, the Board approved the award of a contract to Long Beach-based ecological consulting firm, Tidal Influence, to conduct a Spring Biological Survey of WCA's "Vasquez" property. WCA's "Vasquez" property [AIN 8684-024-907] is approximately 40 acres of undeveloped land in the San Gabriel Mountain Foothills above the City of Azusa.

The biological survey commenced in March. The consultants have been visiting the property regularly and have laid out herpetological coverboard arrays and a wildlife camera to understand wildlife use of the property. The camera has captured the presence of a fox!

The survey and accompanying report are expected to be submitted in July. The survey results and land management recommendations included in the report will form the basis of a land management plan which is expected to include a restoration component, and to be formed in dialogue with other foothills conservation stakeholders.

**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. The GREEN project is a multipart effort by the agency to promote urban greening in the WCA / RMC territory. The GREEN portal website will be a tool that documents, complements, and amplifies these efforts. Most recently, WCA has been working on the GREEN Project Portal, and is working with the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District on the specific content and outcomes of the Portal.

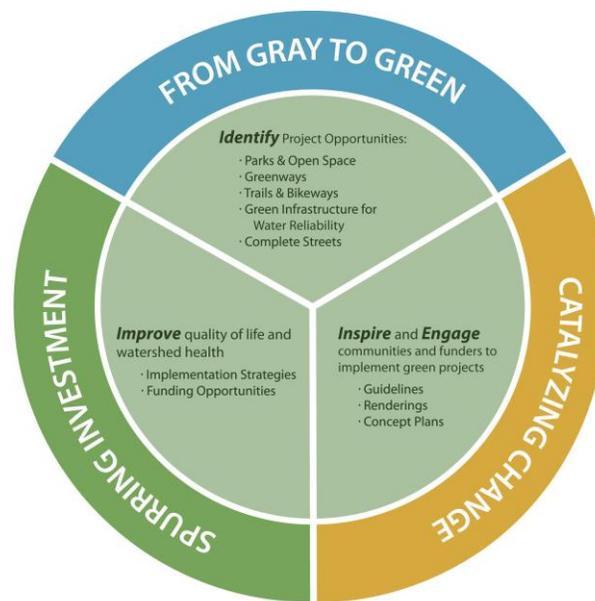


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*The Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project is a planning and project implementation initiative supporting watershed-based greening efforts to help support collaboration in the wider Los Angeles and Orange County area. The 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 Greenspace tool is underway with all 12 greenscapes in production. Staff are currently drafting and uploading written and visual content to the Gateway Greening website. Staff is currently incorporation consultant data analysis into city-specific profile and region-wide recommendations. The design and development of the web portal is complete, although staff needs to continue to migrate material into new templates and user interfaces. The WCA and RMC recently coordinated to bring an additional \$120,000 to the Gateway Greening Project to support staff labor and outside contracts and contributions. The project is expected to be complete by the end of 2019. The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

WCA is also collaborating with the Gateway Cities COG and GWMA on Prop 68 grant applications to continue planning and implementation of urban greening in the Gateway Cities.



*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 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.*

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**Los Angeles River Environmental Flows Study Supplemental Analysis:** The WCA Governing Board authorized the WCA to apply and receive funding from RMC's Proposition 1 program for the Los Angeles River Environmental Flows Study Supplemental Analysis (Supplemental Analysis) at the March 21, 2019 WCA Governing Board Meeting. On April 19, 2019, the RMC Governing Board authorized the grant to the WCA. To date, the WCA has attended stakeholder meetings as necessary for the study.

*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. Including the WCA as part of the Stakeholder group and adding a third-party review of the analysis itself.*

**Mt. Baldy Wilderness Preserve:** WCA staff is coordinating a Convert-a-Can event for early/mid-June 2019. The event will bring together community members and volunteers to assist in painting murals on two trash cans and one onsite job box. The murals promote clean open space through the use of art and creativity while encouraging proper trash disposal and graffiti prevention. The murals will include imagery of natural landscapes found within the Angeles National Forest. Similar Convert-a-Can murals can be found at the East Fork and West Fork.

*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:** The USFS, WCA, and consultant project team will reconvene May 14<sup>th</sup> to review and summarize all background data, lake study, survey, and outreach. The team will then begin to outline and define conceptual alternatives for the San Gabriel Canyon and Crystal Lake areas.

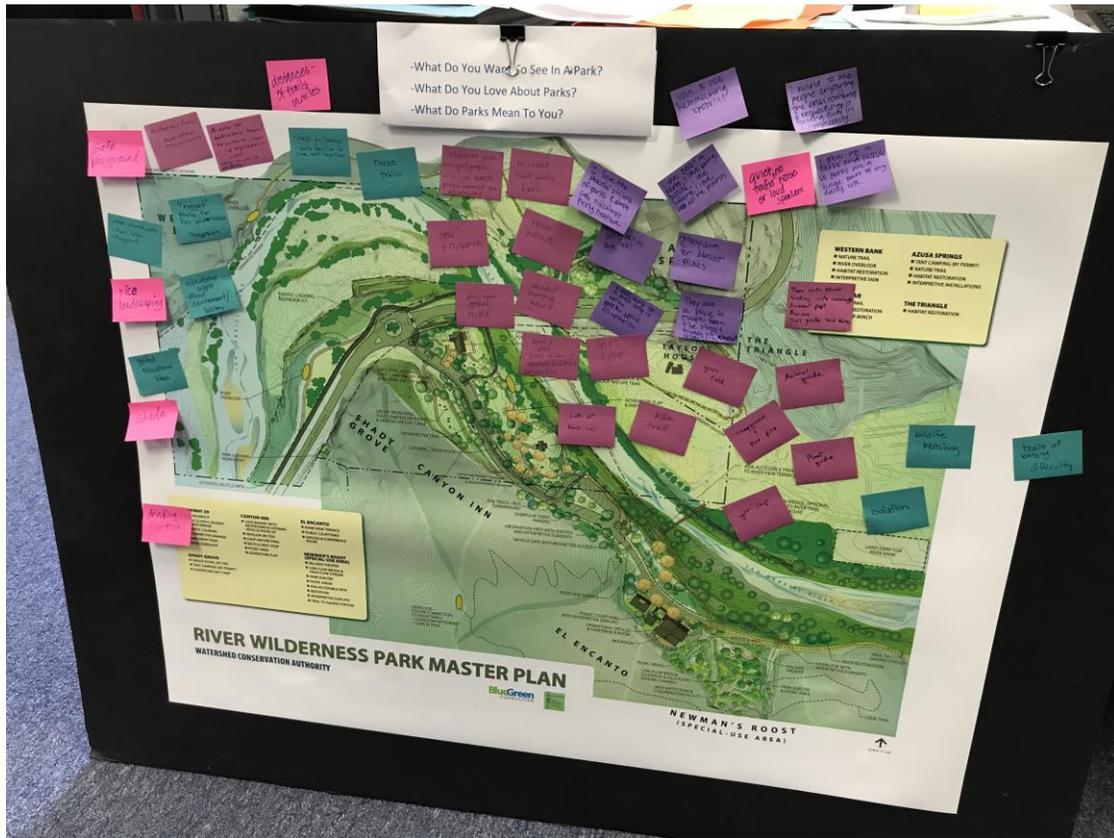
*Crystal Lake Redevelopment and San Gabriel Canyon Master Planning, authorized by U.S. Forest Service under a Supplemental Project Agreement with WCA, to implement a redevelopment and enhancement conceptual planning effort for the Crystal Lake recreation area located in the Angeles National Forest, as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

**River Wilderness Park:** Staff is working with City of Azusa, Caltrans and Design team to restart and complete the design packages for the overlook and park entry improvement elements of the park. WCA is currently pursuing a strategy of developing the park without the Roundabout on Highway 39, as its 4<sup>th</sup> application for ATP funds was not successful. However, the RMC has sent Caltrans a formal request letter to include the roundabout as part of the current capital projects. WCA will continue to advocate for the roundabout, but will develop the park in its absence in order to prevent further delays. Staff will prepare Prop 68 grant applications and will pursue other grant opportunities to fill funding gaps for park elements.

In April, student volunteers from the Azusa Pacific University Center for Student Action and 2 local residents volunteered to support maintenance of the park. Services included painting the WCA emergency supply box, sanding and staining the park kiosk, cleaning and weeding the Hilda Solis Overlook, and weeding and sweeping the entry native gardens and entry kiosk standing area. The event kicked off with speakers from Canyon City Environmental Project, Nathan Nunez, Supervisor Hilda Solis's office, Azusa historian and longtime advocate of the RWP, Suzanne Aviles, and Azusa/RMC JPA and Azusa Councilmember Uriel Macias. Participants were also given sticky notes and pens and asked to write down their responses to 3 questions

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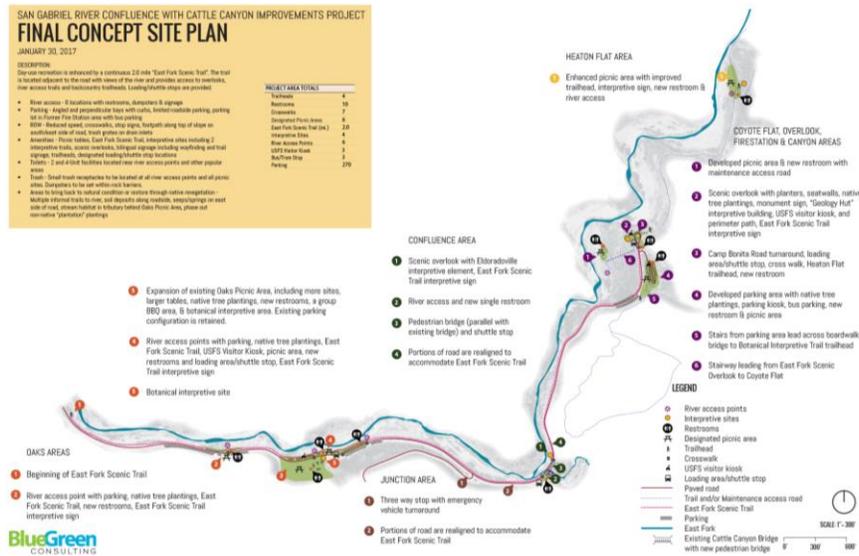
about parks to open up a conversation about the Azusa River Wilderness Park and future park expansion and improvements.



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:** Staff is reapplying for funding from the National Forest Foundation (NFF) to complete the design of the Oaks River Access project along with already secured remaining funding from Resource Legacy Fund (RLF). WCA is awaiting a conference meeting with the RMC to update the status of the project for a pending award to fund construction.

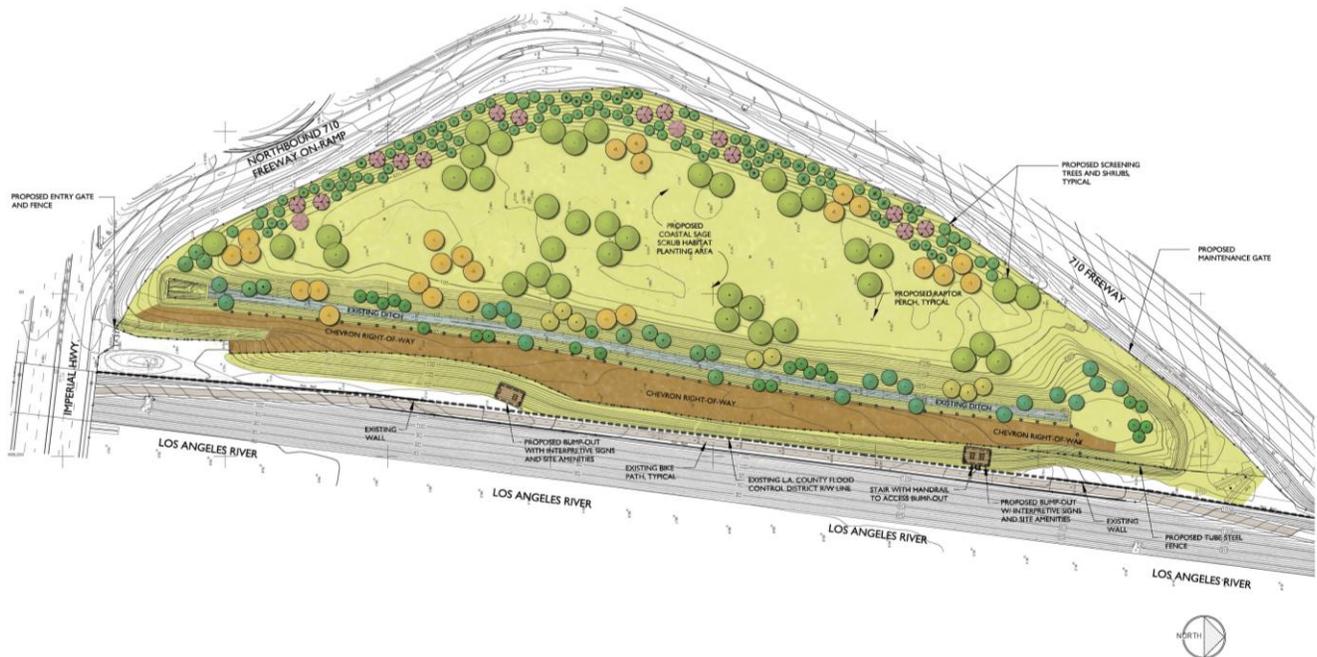
U.S. Forest Service anticipates making a decision of record on the EIS/EIR for the project later this year.



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.

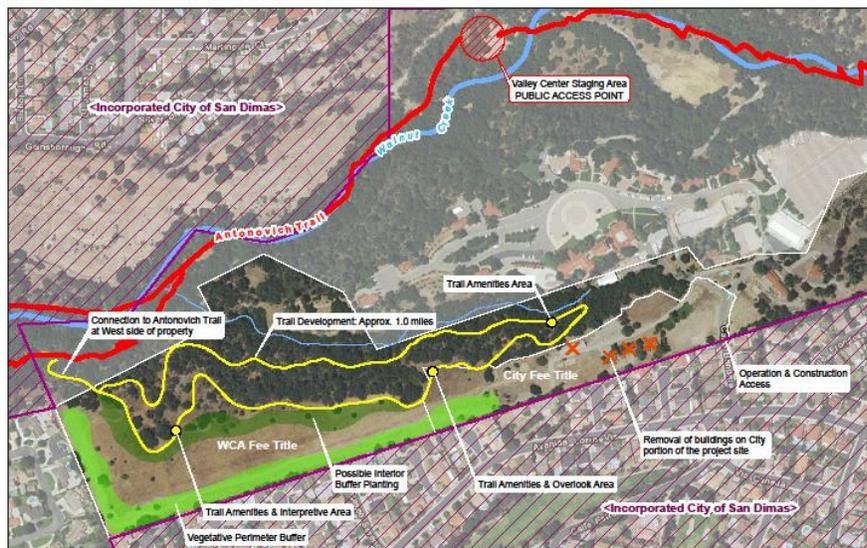
**South Gate Habitat Restoration Project/Parque dos Rios:** WCA has been informed by CCLB that they are targeting a June 2019 start date for the project and that they will be ready to enter into the Construction Contract this month. Once the CCLB's contract is executed, CCLB will begin to pull permits and a ground-breaking event can be scheduled.

*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:** Landscape designers BlueGreen have submitted 95% draft documents and a meeting was held between WCA, the City of San Dimas, and consultants to review the 95% draft. Meanwhile, the City of San Dimas is nearly finished with trail construction. Staff and consultants are working to forward the landscape design through the subsequent RFP and construction process.

**WALNUT CREEK – WEST PHASE ONLY**

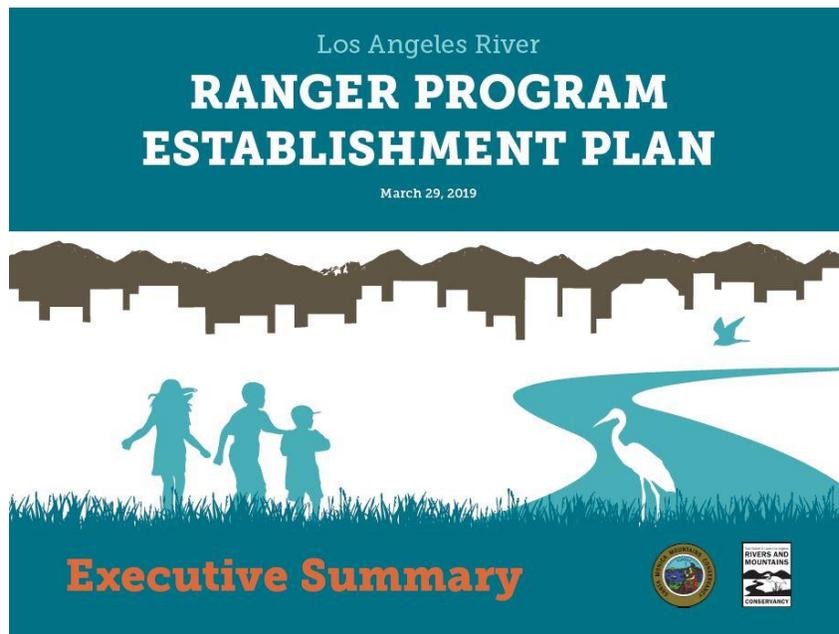


*Acquired in 2008, the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space Property is a total of approx. 60.8 acres. The location is directly east of Bonelli Regional Park and along the Walnut Creek riparian corridor. Approximately 6.7 acres are owned by the City of San Dimas and 54 acres are owned by the WCA.*

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*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 and connect to the Antonovich Trail via County-operated trail staging areas.*

**River Ranger Program Implementation Project:** Following the final River Ranger Stakeholder Meeting #6, the draft River Ranger Plan was sent to the Steering Committee and Stakeholder Committee for review and feedback. The Plan was also sent to NGO's who had conducted the Plan's community outreach. All feedback was reviewed and incorporated into the draft Plan. On March 29, 2019, the Los Angeles River Ranger Program Establishment Plan Executive Summary was delivered to Legislature. The Plan is undergoing its final review by the Project Leads and the full Plan will be submitted to Legislature by May 15, 2019.





## ENVISIONING THE PROGRAM

### MISSION

The mission of the River Ranger Program is to 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.

### VISION

*How the River Ranger Program and a revitalized river will impact communities in the future...*

As the river is being revitalized and embraced as a community resource, the River Ranger Program will ensure safe, enjoyable and equitable experiences along the LA River and its tributaries by promoting equitable access, recreational and educational opportunities, community engagement, and resource protection along this vital resource. The River Ranger Program will provide opportunities to experience the River as a safe and inviting place, and to participate in its enhancement through volunteer or employment programs.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1

#### Maintenance and Resource Management

Natural, cultural, and built resources along the Los Angeles River provide multiple environmental and community benefits; these resources will be protected, maintained, enhanced, and interpreted for the public to ensure that the River is a safe and enjoyable place to visit.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2

#### Recreation, Interpretation and Education Programs

The Los Angeles River will continue to serve as an outdoor classroom that provides resources and experiences that build understanding and inspire appreciation of the river's ecology, history, and community benefits, as well as an experiential landscape that offers active and passive recreational opportunities that respond to the varying physical conditions along the River.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3

#### Outreach and Engagement

All visitors will be encouraged to utilize the River, and provided information and resources to ensure safe and resource-sensitive use.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4

#### Public Safety

Designated access points, trails, parks and open spaces along the Los Angeles River should be inviting and safe for visitors to enjoy.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5

#### Administration & Coordination

Coordination and collaboration among agencies with jurisdiction over the River, organizations that provide services and programs, and members of the public is essential to providing dependable services that enhance the river as a natural and community resource. The River Ranger Program will act as a central conduit to bring together all parties involved.

WCA Satellite Office: WCA staff is working with the Conservation Corps of Long Beach to identify and formalize an agreement to utilize office space at one or more of their facilities. WCA has toured available office spaces at both their Nietos Ave. and Atlantic Ave. sites. At a minimum, the space will consist of two offices and 1 cubicle space.

