

DATE: September 12, 2019

TO: WCA Governing Board

FROM: Jeremy Munns, Project Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 10: Consideration of a resolution to accept a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the East Fork Sustainable River Access Project.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board accept a partial award of \$128,700 in grant funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) Proposition 1 Grant Program for the East Fork Sustainable River Access Project and to accept an award up to \$1,730,000 should the full grant be awarded.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The grant award will be utilized to support the construction of a sustainable river access and area development improvement across from the Oaks Picnic Area within the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument (SGMNM) and the Angeles National Forest (ANF). A Location Map is included as Exhibit A. The project includes a formalized access route to the river, a segment of the East Fork Scenic Trail, interpretive elements/graphics and associated amenities including a restroom facility picnic area, low wall seating, informational kiosk and parking improvements. A Concept Plan is included as Exhibit B. The partial grant amount will fund environmental permitting/A&E services as well as the bid/award process.

BACKGROUND: The East Fork River Access Project (River Access Project) is one of five Sustainable Recreation Model projects from the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Plan, certified by the WCA Governing Board in October 2018, that seeks to modify visitor behaviors by developing an access point with amenities to concentrate recreational use to a define location in order to reduce erosion and littering, Exhibit C: Overall East Fork Project Plan.

The River Access Project will be the first implementation of a project from the Plan and one of the first major improvements in the Monument since its dedication in 2014. The goal of the project will be to serve as a model for sustainable recreational, balancing recreational uses with resource protection and achieved through the following objectives:

- Implement targeted improvements to modify visitor behaviors through the Sustainable Site Access Model.
- Water quality protection through a watershed management approach utilizing best management practices such as bioswales and filter strips, adequate trash receptacles, signage, native plantings, and paved parking for directed surface water flow.
- Promote stewardship of public land by providing quality and sustainable recreation opportunities that result in increased visitor satisfaction.
- Allow for better management of the recreation resources on the forest through interpretive elements.

- Improve riparian habitat conditions with design features such as a formalized access route to reduce recreational impacts, such as erosion, and degradation of natural resources, native vegetation, water quality, and habitat.

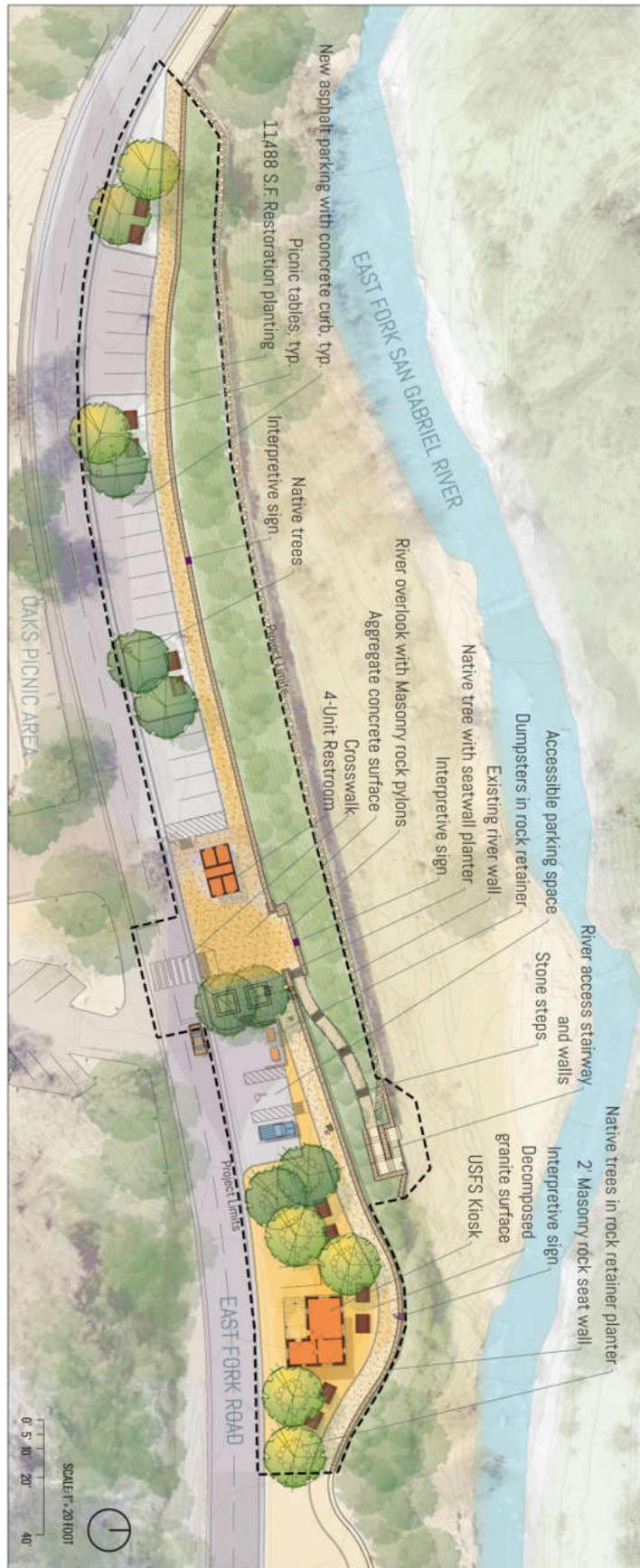
Between 2014 and 2016, prefabricated crib walls and stairs were installed at the Oaks River Access Point in preparation for USFS First Anniversary celebration of the Monument designation and to facilitate visitor access to the River. This access solution was meant to be a temporary improvement until a final solution was developed and implemented following completion, certification and filing of the Environmental Documents. In the meantime, USFS sought to forward a maintenance-level improvement to the stairs; for which, National Forest Foundation (NFF) and Resource Legacy Fund (RLF) provided funding to develop and implement the interim maintenance upgrade. In 2018, with completion of the EIS/EIR on the horizon, a decision was made to forego the interim maintenance fix in favor of implementing the permanent stairs, as well as, the expanded scope of the Sustainable River Access Point Model concept as defined in the East Fork Plan. Committed NFF and RLF funds will now be utilized to complete final Construction Documents by December 2019.

In December 2018, WCA staff submitted a grant application for the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Proposition 1 fund, which was ratified by the WCA Board in January 2019. In June 2019, the RMC Board approved a partial grant award of \$128,700 to complete the permitting and bid/award process for the project to be shovel ready. The Forest Service is scheduled to take an action regarding the EIR/EIS by January 2019, which may result in the RMC awarding the full grant amount. In July 2019, WCA staff also applied for RMC Proposition 68 funding to support project construction. If funded, construction has an expected start date of September 2020.

FISCAL INFORMATION: A partial award of \$128,700 will be reflected as an update to WCA's Fiscal Year Capital Budget. Should the RMC award the full grant, this amount will increase up to \$1,730,000.

Exhibit B

Concept Plan



Overall East Fork Project Plan

SAN GABRIEL RIVER CONFLUENCE WITH CATTLE CANYON IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT FINAL CONCEPT SITE PLAN JANUARY 30, 2017

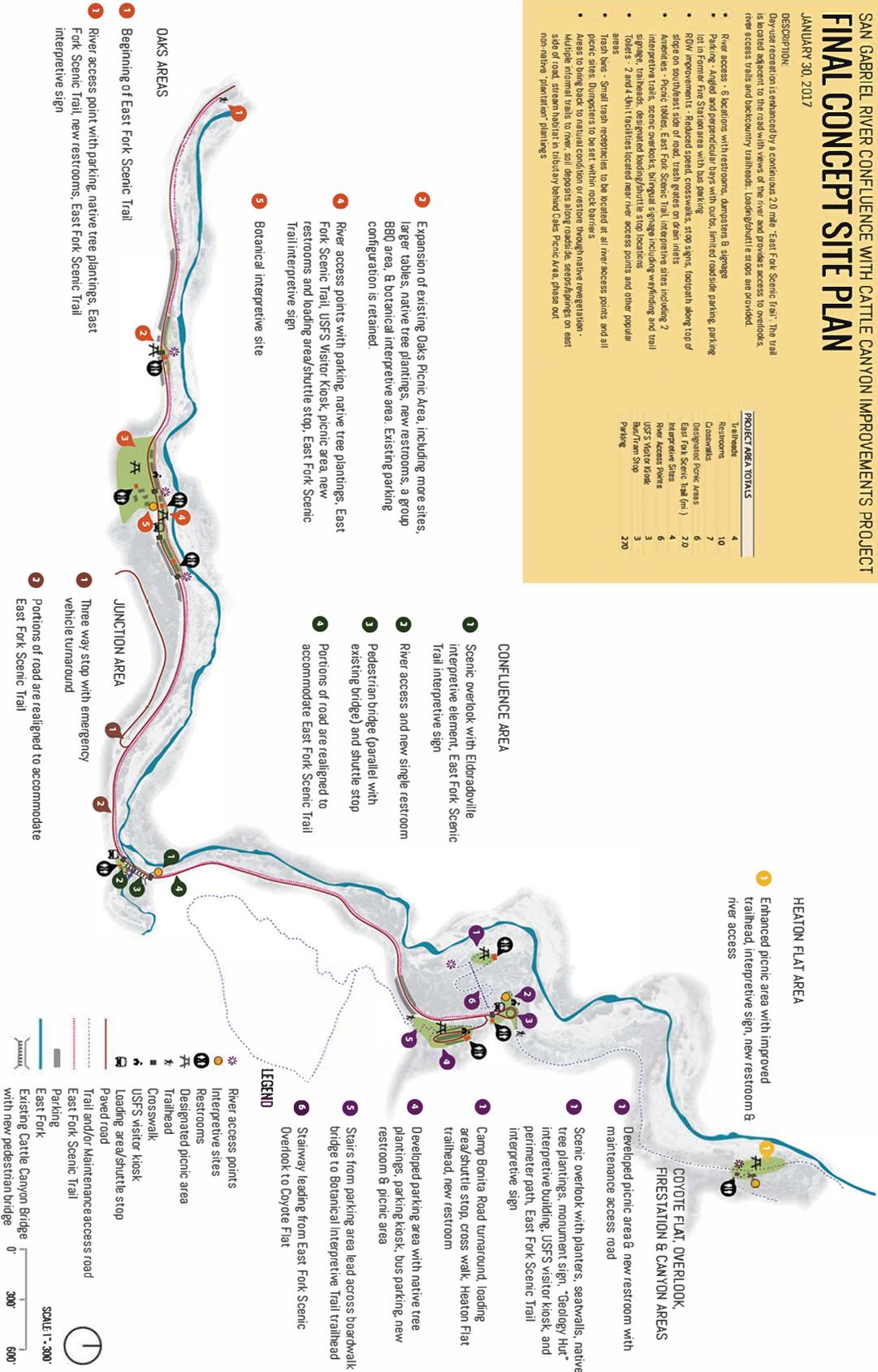
DESCRIPTION:

On-site recreation is enhanced by a continuous 2.0 mile "East Fork Scenic Trail". The trail is located adjacent to the road with views of the river and provides access to overlooks, river access trails and backcountry trailheads. Landfill/shuttle stops are provided.

- River access - 6 locations with restrooms, dumpsters & signage
- Parking - Angled and perpendicular bays with curbs, limited roadside parking, parking lot in former Fire Station area with bus parking
- ROW improvements - Reduced speed, crosswalks, stop signs, loadpath along top of slope on south/east side of road, trash grates on drain inlets
- Amenities - Picnic tables, East Fork Scenic Trail interpretive signs including 2 interpretive trails, scenic overlooks, interpretive signage including wayfinding and trail signage
- Structures - 2 and 4-hr trailshelters located near river access points and other popular areas
- Trash bins - Small trash receptacles to be located at all river access points and all picnic sites. Dumpsters to be set within rock barriers
- Areas to bring back to natural condition or restore through native revegetation
- Multiple informal trails to river, soil deposits along roadside, seeps/signings on east side of road, stream habitat in tributary behind Oaks Picnic Area, phase out non-native planter/ plantings

PROJECT AREA TOTALS

Trailheads	4
Restrooms	10
Crosswalks	7
Designated Picnic Areas	6
East Fork Scenic Trail (mi.)	2.0
Interpretive Sites	4
River Access Points	6
USFS Visitor Kiosk	3
Bus/Traffic Stop	3
Parking	270



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RESOLUTION 2019-39

RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT A GRANT FROM THE RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR THE EAST FORK SUSTAINABLE RIVER ACCESS PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has been established as a joint powers agency between the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District; and

WHEREAS, the WCA has further been established to focus on projects which will provide open space, habitat restoration, and watershed improvement projects in both the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers watershed; and

WHEREAS, this action will accept a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for the East Fork Sustainable River Access Project; and

WHEREAS, the proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act; **NOW**

Therefore be it resolved that the WCA hereby:

1. **FINDS** that this action is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the WCA.
2. **FINDS** that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
3. **ADOPTS** the staff report dated September 12, 2019.
4. **ACCEPTS** a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for partial funding of \$128,700 and up to \$1,730,000 full funding for the East Fork Sustainable River Access Project.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Resolution 2019-39

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On September 12, 2019

Herlinda Chico
Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
David Edsall, Jr.
Deputy Attorney General