

**DATE:** ~~July 25, 2015~~ June 25, 2015

**TO:** Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

**FROM:** WCA Staff

**THROUGH:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Item 7: Liaison and Activities Report

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Greater Los Angeles County Regional Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Planning: With the announcement of Proposition 84 IRWM Implementation Grant funds from the California Department of Water Resources the Greater Los Angeles County Leadership Committee selected projects to receive consulting services technically review for the regions project submittal, inclusive of Gateway cities area.

San Gabriel River Discovery Center Authority: The SGRDCA has engaged the Design team of THA to enter into a contract and begin work on the Construction Documents for the Area Development component of the project.

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument: Following the October 10, 2014 Presidential Proclamation establishing the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, two separate planning processes have been initiated. The first is the preparation of an amendment to the Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan, referred to as the Monument Management Plan. When complete, the resulting planning document will guide management of monument resources for the next 10 to 15 years. The process to develop that plan includes public input as mandated by the 2012 U.S. Forest Service Planning Rule, which requires transparent, thoughtful and frank deliberation and engagement of diverse perspectives and interest. In formally initiating this planning process, the Angeles National Forest as announced a first series of public meeting that will be held on June 22-June 26, 2015. These meetings will provide the public, agencies, and other groups an opportunity to learn about the Monument, talk directly with Forest Service staff, and provide input into the Management Plan. Further details about these meeting are provided below.



United States Department of Agriculture

## Angeles National Forest & San Gabriel Mountains National Monument

### PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS - June 22 - 26, 2015

- **June 22, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Pacific Community Center, 501 S. Pacific Ave., Glendale, CA 91204**
- **June 23, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Palmdale Legacy Commons Senior Center, 930 East Avenue Q9, Palmdale, CA 93550**
- **June 24, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Public Library, 140 S. Glendora Ave., Glendora, CA 91741**
- **June 25, 3:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Pico House, 424 N. Main St., Los Angeles, CA 90012**
- **June 26, 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Big Pines Lodge, 24537 Big Pines Highway (at Hwy 2 Junction), Wrightwood, CA 92397**

Meetings are open to the public between 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate. Meeting are conducted in an open house format.

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### USDA Forest Service

The Angeles National Forest will hold five public meetings to discuss the development of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Management Plan and how you can participate in the process. The official comment period will be open from June 12—July 27, 2015 for a 45 day comment period.

The Forest is required to have the Monument Plan completed with the next three years from the October 10, 2015 designation. The plan, once developed and approved, will guide how Monument resources and uses will be managed until the plan is revised.

During the official comment period you may attend one of the five open house style meeting, comment through email or contact the Forest service for more information or a hard copy of the scoping letter by calling (626) 574-5278 and ask for Justin Seastrand, Forest Planner or visit our website at: [http://lfs.fed.us/nepa/nepa\\_project\\_exp.php?project=46964](http://lfs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=46964)

\*Additionally if you are planning to attend one of the public meetings and are in need of sign language interpretation, please let us know so we can make arrangements.



Forest Service

Pacific Southwest Region

Angeles National Forest & San Gabriel Mountains National Monument

Public Open House June 2015

The second planning activity involves the establishment of a San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Community Collaborative. An emerging purpose for this Community Collaborative is to represent diverse stakeholder perspectives in identifying, prioritizing, and advocating for investments, management objectives, and values that sustainably benefit the Angeles National Forest, the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, and all the communities throughout the region. Facilitated by the National Forest Foundation, the collaborative is currently formulating its membership structure and polices. While the Community Collaborative includes RMC and LACFCD representation, the WCA is currently requesting that it have its own representation on the Collaborative.

San Gabriel National Recreation Area: The WCA continues to track (Chu): San Gabriel National Recreation Area Act. The bill was introduced to Congress and referred to the House Natural Resources Committee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation on June 12, 2014. However, no further action was taken during the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress. Co-sponsors included Congressman Tony Cardenas (D-CA29) and Adam Schiff (D-CA28). Proposed Wilderness additions and Wild and Scenic River designations within the Angeles National Forest are also being tracked by the WCA. Although Congresswoman Judy Chu released draft legislation earlier this year for public comments, the WCA is not currently aware of any public meeting or activities related to this topic. Staff will continue to monitor.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

WCA Junior Ranger Program: A \$2,500 grant from 3M Corporation Foundation was utilized in March by staff, in collaboration with the Habitat Fund and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) rangers, to provide a Jr. Ranger Program for young people aged 7-12 years old from surrounding

communities. Participants were invited to learn about and explore nature with our park rangers. Activities included fun, educational, and hands-on talks, crafts, and hikes at the River Wilderness Park.

Following the program, overwhelmingly positive feedback was collected from participating families. Staff has compiled and submitted feedback with the close-out grant report and 3M has contacted the WCA regarding future grant opportunities. Some comments below:

*“Was really informative for kids and for adults too.”*

*“I just want to thank you for the opportunity so rich in information and great experience for the students where they learned a lot and will be able to apply it in their everyday life. Staff was great and very helpful. Yes, I would like to know of other programs and activities in the future.”*

*“Great activities”*

*“My child loved it very much, look forward going every meeting. She learned more about the wilderness then before, now when we go it’s much different than before. We take care of the land more and appreciate nature in a whole different way. Thank you for taking the time to show us. Very appreciated of being able to join the program and hoping to continue in any other programs or events”*

## **WCA PROJECTS**

Azusa River Wilderness Park Project: River Wilderness Park (RWP) is a approx. 75.7 acre property which is slated to provide a unique wilderness experiences in the lower San Gabriel River Canyon: engaging landscapes, gathering spaces, thriving habitats, and a regional hub and welcome center for both the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

Based on the 2012 adopted RWP Master Plan, staff is currently perusing the design development of the RWP Entry Improvements. Key benefits of the RWP Entry Project include conserving and enhancing open space, preserving ecologically significant land for the public, encouraging outdoor activity, and providing facilities to cultivate awareness, appreciation, and stewardship of our natural resources. A proposed open-air pavilion and interactive nature play area embody these benefits as central parts of the plan to draw people into the park, providing enriching spaces to experience, and to engage the public in exploration.

Design consultants working on the design development of the RWP Entry Improvements are in the process of preparing 90% construction documents. Throughout this design process staff and the design team are continuing to coordinate with permitting and regulatory agencies that have purview of the project, including Caltrans and the City of Azusa. Updated CEQA analysis and documentation is also underway that will incorporate the proposed improvements on the Canyon Inn Property that have not been previously reviewed under the existing RWP Mitigated Negative Deceleration.

To fund these proposed improvements, staff has also prepared and submitted two grant proposal since the last Board meeting. These include an application to the 2015 Californian Active Transportation Program for the San Gabriel River Bike Trail Gap Closure, Roundabout and Park Entry Improvements Project to fund the construction of 1,750 feet of Class I bike trail and a safe crossing and roundabout on State Route 39, closing the gap between the River Wilderness Park and the San Gabriel River Bikeway. Details of this grant application submittal are farther discussed under a separate agency item. Additionally, another grant

application was submitted to the Proposition A Countywide Competitive Grant Program to fund interactive nature play area and pavilion.

An in-depth presentation of the RWP Entry project has been scheduled for the July 23<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting.

Citrus Grove Heights Bike Stop: Two conceptual design options for the bike stop have been completed and staff is actively engaging stakeholders to develop a final plan option and move the project forward. Feedback and preliminary approvals have supported bikeway access into the site, a bike service station, shade structure, on-site storage, hitching posts, interpretive site elements, and landscaping.

Key stakeholders include the City of Pico Rivera, City of Whittier (due to adjacent water conveying infrastructure), Los Angeles County Flood Control District, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bike Coordinators, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation Planning Division, BikeSGV, Equestrian Joint Council, and the Puente Hills Habitat Authority.

Coyote Creek Park – City of Los Alamitos

**Coyote Creek Park  
Grand Opening**

**Parks  
Make  
Life  
Better!**

**The City of Los Alamitos City Council cordially invites you and your family to join us at the Grand Opening of Coyote Creek Park as we celebrate "Parks Make Life Better" month**

**Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>  
4:30 p.m.**

The Coyote Creek Park project focus was to create a passive recreation area with landscaping composed of native plants of significant ecological value to the region to attract habitat and restore the site into a passive greenway park along the Coyote Creek Channel.

**COYOTE CREEK PARK**  
CERRITOS AVE.  
SAUSALITO ST.  
TRAIL  
CATALINA ST.  
PARKING  
FLORISTA ST.  
KATELLA AVE.  
OAK ST.  
WALNUT ST.  
CIVIC CENTER DR.  
OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL

**www.cityoflosalamitos.org**  
**(562) 430-1073**

**Parks  
Make  
Life  
Better!**

**Parks  
Make  
Life  
Better!**

Duck Farm Project: Willdan Consulting is finalizing their review of the updated plan sets for quality control and to confirm the plans are ready for resubmittal to each agency for review, approval and issuance of permits or consent as applicable. To date, plans have been transmitted to both Caltrans and SCE for review and approval. Staff will work with first District representative and Watershed Division in the resubmittal of updated plans to County departments. Upon receipt of agency approvals, a construction set will be issued and a Request for Bids notice will be posted.

Staff has identified an individual to provide enhanced security and maintenance activities on the property services in exchange for living on the property. The person, has been hired as a part-time, project hire park host/caretaker employee.

Emerald Necklace: The WCA is managing the Emerald Necklace Feasibility Study and Implementation Planning Project with the purpose of identifying trail connection and urban greening projects throughout the 17-mile network. This work is being conducted in collaboration with members of the Emerald Necklace Coordination Committee, which includes staff from the RMC, Amigos de los Rios, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, Los Angeles Flood Control District, and County of Los Angeles First Supervisorial District.

The Implementation Report is scheduled to be completed by late summer of 2015, and the final Program EIR is scheduled to be certified in 2016. These activities will complete the Feasibility Study and Implementation Planning Project initiated in 2011. This final report will detail the necessary steps in constructing a suite of priority projects identified out of the previously completed feasibility study, while the EIR will outline the cumulative environmental impacts of these projects at a programmatic level and identify further steps that must be taken to meet the CEQA Statute and Guidelines. Priority projects focus on development of trail connections to and within Whittier Narrows Regional Park, trail development along the Rio Hondo, and development of a 'Quarry Clasp' trail connection.

An in-depth project update and presentation has been scheduled for the July 23<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting.

Gateway Cities Greenways and Rivers Master Plan: The grant will develop a greenway and green infrastructure plan for the missing middle section of the Los Angeles River and surrounding Gateway cities region. The goal of the project is to provide a planning document and tools to allow cities and the region to move projects forward and be successful in attaining funding from a variety of sources to improve health and the environment through green infrastructure, parks, trails, greenways and river linkages within the Gateway Cities and along the Lower Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers.

Drafts of master Plan framework, Advisory Committee and Data Management structure have been developed and were shared with Gateway COG representative. WCA has hired a new Associate PM assigned to this project and will begin data collection and outreach activities. WCA, in collaboration with UCLA's Luskin Center is holding a joint community outreach workshop within the next 30 days to introduce the Urban Greening Master Plan Project and begin to collect community input. This collaboration is part of a larger effort to work with other NGO's and interested parties working in the Gateway Cities and adjacent region on the sharing of open source data supporting the establishment of a region-wide planning tool that is consistent to the larger watershed and greater LA region.

San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Project: The Cattle Canyon Project seeks to address unsustainable recreation practices, which includes habitat disturbance and increased risk to human health from water contact recreation. Other goals of the project seek to improve safety, and to enhance the visitor experience and quality of recreational amenities provided along the river.

The current Phase 1 of Cattle Canyon Project includes both a planning study and an outreach program focused on the prevention of specific harmful recreational behaviors through an information campaign meant to build awareness among site users. The planning study, includes a comprehensive site assessment and conceptual planning process that has identified opportunities for physical improvements, as well as to a lesser extent, management considerations that will improve site conditions.

On June 12<sup>th</sup> the planning and design consultants, BlueGreen Consulting, presented three schematic design options layouts that depict a range of feasible opportunities to address sustainable recreation at the project site. Based on comments from the advisory committee, as well as target stakeholder outreach, the concepts presented within these alternatives will be refined into a preferred conceptual site development plan and final concept planning report.

South Gate Habitat Restoration Project/Parque dos Rios: Awaiting North East Trees, as the architect of record, to complete updates to the permit packages as required per comments received from permit agencies. Following securing permits, staff will coordinate with Willdan to begin the construction bid process. LACFCD is in process of evaluating options in its consideration to permit project to utilize their water line to irrigate the proposed park during its establishment period before being released from supplemental water in the future.

Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space: Acquired in 2008, the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space Property is a total of approx. 60.8 acres. It is located 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. The City's portion is directly adjacent to the Loma Vista Park, creating a continuous property that will enlarge the park and open it up to the natural open space area.

After completing a conceptual development plan for the site in coordination with the City of San Dimas, the City secured Prop A funding begin phase 1 development including trail development and public access. The City and WCA are continuing to collaborate through the CEQA review and documentation process, in which the WCA is acting as the lead agency.

A Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Deceleration document has been prepared that addresses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the project. This environmental documentation and supporting analysis were subject to a public review period from May 12<sup>th</sup> to June 10<sup>th</sup>. During this review, agency and public comments relative to environmental issues were collected and will be part of the recorded document. Consideration of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration by the San Dimas City Council, acting as a responsible agency, will take place on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and consideration of adoption of the document by the Watershed Conservation Authority, acting as lead agency, is scheduled for the July 23<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting.

Lastly, the WCA continues to work with the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, an adjacent property owner, to address potential lot-line adjustments, land swaps, and utility easement concerns.