

DATE: June 1, 2023
TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board
FROM: WCA Staff
THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Item 07: 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 05/05/2023

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 RMC and its respective Joint Powers Authorities. Bills can be tracked on the legislative website: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

STATE

PARKS AND WATER

SB 867 (Allen) Drought and Water Resilience, Wildfire and Forest Resilience, Coastal Resilience, Extreme Heat Mitigation, Biodiversity and Nature-Based Climate Solutions, Climate Smart Agriculture, and Park Creation and Outdoor Access Bond Act of 2024

Introduced: 2/17/2023, **Status:** Re-referred to Committee on Governance and Finance

Summary: This bill would enact the Drought and Water Resilience, Wildfire and Forest Resilience, Coastal Resilience, Extreme Heat Mitigation, Biodiversity and Nature-Based Climate Solutions, Climate Smart Agriculture, and Park Creation and Outdoor Access, and Clean Energy Bond Act of 2024, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$15,500,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for drought, flood, and water resilience, wildfire and forest resilience, coastal resilience, extreme heat mitigation, biodiversity and nature-based climate solutions, climate smart agriculture, park creation and outdoor access, and clean energy programs. The current version of this bill includes an appropriation of \$75,000,000 for the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and an additional \$75,000,000 for Lower Los Angeles River projects.

AB 1567 (Garcia D) Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, and Workforce Development Bond Act of 2024

Introduced: 02/17/23, **Status:** Re-referred to Committee on Natural Resources

Summary: This bill would enact the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, and Workforce Development Bond Act of 2024, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$15,105,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, drought preparation, flood protection, extreme heat mitigation, and workforce development programs. This bill would provide for the submission of these provisions to the voters at the March 5, 2024, statewide primary election. Appropriation included for the establishment of the Salton Sea Conservancy and the California Trails Conservancy. The current version of this bill includes an appropriation of \$65,000,000 for the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and an additional \$25,000,000 for Lower Los Angeles River projects.

AB 305 (Villapudua) California Flood Protection Bond Act of 2024

Introduced: 01/26/2023, **Status:** Re-referred to Committee of Water, Parks, and Wildlife

Summary: This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation for a flood protection general obligation bond act, in an unspecified amount, that would be known as the California Flood Protection Bond Act of 2024, and would be submitted to the voters at the next general election. Funds shall be available for the modernization of designated floodways in the Central Valley.

AB 833 (Rivas, L) State Parks: Rio de Los Angeles State Park: Expansion Plan: Los Angeles River

Introduced: 2/14/2023, **Status:** Read second time and amended

Summary: This bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation to collaborate and coordinate with the County of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles, other cities along the Los Angeles River, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy to develop a plan to expand the Rio de Los Angeles State Park on lands along the Los Angeles River and its tributaries. This would potentially create a 51 mile park system along the Los Angeles River operated and maintained by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The plan shall consider the development of a multibenefit park space to increase park equity, an assessment of present and future demand for park space along the LA River and its tributaries, and recommendations for future funding needs.

Existing law designates all parks, public campgrounds, monument sites, landmark sites, and sites of historical interest established or acquired by the state, or that are under its control, as the state park system, except as specified. Under existing law, the Department of Parks and Recreation controls the state park system, which is made up of units, one of which is the Rio de Los Angeles State Park.

AB 57 (Kalra) California Pocket Forest Initiative

Introduced: 12/6/2022, **Status:** In Appropriations Committee, Referred to Suspense File

Summary: This bill would establish the California Pocket Forest Initiative in the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and would authorize the department to coordinate implementation of the initiative in conjunction with the act. Upon an appropriation by the Legislature, the bill would authorize the department to provide grants to cities, counties, districts, nonprofit organizations, and public schools to establish pocket forests on public lands, as provided. The bill would require the department to prioritize disadvantaged communities and communities that lack publicly accessible green space for these grants.

The bill would require the department to partner with one or more academic institutions to test, and submit a report on or before January 1, 2030, to the Legislature that evaluates, the applicability and effectiveness of the Miyawaki method, as defined, to restore degraded lands and reforest urban areas in multiple regions throughout California. The bill would repeal these provisions on January 1, 2031.

AB 1596 (Alvarez) Watershed, Clean Beaches, and Water Quality Act: Beaches: Water Quality

Introduced: 2/17/2023, **Status:** In Committee, Hearing Cancelled at Request of Author

Summary: This bill would require the State Water Resources Control Board to identify and implement projects to improve beach access and address ocean water quality on public beaches that experience significant restrictions of use due to bacteria levels that exceed public health standards, whether the source is from urban runoff or transboundary flows. Existing law, the Watershed, Clean Beaches, and Water Quality Act, among other things, provides that it is the intent of the Legislature that the purpose of maintaining clean beaches, clean water, and an integrated and coordinated watershed program is to protect beaches, coastal waters, rivers, lakes, and streams from contaminants, pollution, and other environmental threats. The act requires the State Water Resources Control Board, in consultation with the State Coastal Conservancy, to award grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for projects designed to improve water quality at public beaches, as specified.

AB 849 (Garcia) Community Emissions Reduction Programs

Introduced: 2/14/23, **Status:** In Appropriations Committee, Referred to Suspense File

Summary: This bill would require an air district to consult with other relevant state agencies in adopting a community emissions reduction program. By imposing additional duties on air districts, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would require a state agency to implement and enforce measures assigned to them as a part of the community emissions reduction program unless the relevant state agency finds that those measures are infeasible at a public meeting of its governing body. Existing law requires the State Air Resources Board to prepare, and to update at least once every 5 years, a statewide strategy to reduce emissions of toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants in communities affected by a high cumulative exposure burden. Existing law requires the state board to include in the statewide strategy an assessment and identification of communities with high cumulative exposure burdens for toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants, prioritizing disadvantaged communities and sensitive receptor locations based on specified factors. Based on the assessment and identification of communities with high cumulative exposure burdens they must select locations around the state for preparation of community emissions reduction programs.

SB 336 (Umberg D) State grant programs: negotiated cost rate agreements

Introduced: 02/17/23, **Status:** Placed on Appropriations Committee Suspense File

Summary: This bill would require the Department of General Services to establish, by July 1, 2024, a process by which nonprofits may negotiate a state standard negotiated cost agreement for state grants that are awarded on or after October 1, 2024. The bill would require a state agency or other state entity administering a state grant program to use the same terms as contained in the grantee's existing negotiated indirect cost rate agreements, as defined, and cost allocation policies approved by the federal government, the same terms as contained in the grantee's state standard negotiated cost agreement, or a 10% de minimis indirect cost rate on direct costs, for reimbursement of direct and indirect costs, as provided. Existing law establishes the Department of General Services in the Government Operations

Agency for purposes of providing centralized services of state government. Existing law establishes various state grant programs. Existing federal law provides uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for federal grant awards to nonfederal entities and provides guidelines for determining direct and indirect costs, as defined, charged to federal awards.

AB 433 (Jackson D) State- and County-Funded Grants: Advance Payments

Introduced: 2/6/2023, **Status:** Read first time

Summary: Existing law authorizes specified state departments and authorities, as well as counties, upon determination that an advance payment is essential for the effective implementation of a program, to advance to a community-based private nonprofit agency with which it has contracted for the delivery of services funds not exceeding 25% of the annual allocation to be made to the agency during the fiscal year. Existing law also establishes a pilot program, which is repealed on July 1, 2025, to explore possible improvements to the state's existing advance payment practices for state-funded assistance grants. Existing law authorizes an administering state agency of a grant program to advance a payment to a recipient entity, which means a local agency or a nongovernmental entity that is awarded a grant by an administering state agency and with whom the administering state agency has entered into a contract pursuant to that grant, in accordance with specified procedures. This bill would require state and county departments that offer grants to nonprofit organizations to advance a payment of 10% of the total grant amount awarded to the nonprofit organization, upon request of the nonprofit administrators.

AB 590 (Hart D) State-funded Assistance Grants and Contracts: Advance Payments

Introduced: 2/9/2023, **Status:** Referred to Committee on Accountability and Administrative Review

Summary: Existing law authorizes specified state departments and authorities, upon determination that an advance payment is essential for the effective implementation of a program, to advance to a community-based private nonprofit agency with which it has contracted for the delivery of services funds not exceeding 25% of the annual allocation to be made to the agency during the fiscal year. Existing law also establishes a pilot program, which is repealed on July 1, 2025, to explore possible improvements to the state's existing advance payment practices for state-funded assistance grants. Existing law authorizes an administering state agency of a grant program to advance a payment to a recipient entity, which means a local agency or a nongovernmental entity that is awarded a grant by an administering state agency and with whom the administering state agency has entered into a contract pursuant to that grant, in accordance with specified procedures. These procedures include stipulating an advance payment structure and request process within the grant agreement or contract and ensuring that the advance payment to the recipient entity does not exceed 25% of the total grant amount awarded to the recipient entity, except in specified circumstances. This bill would declare the intent of the Legislature to improve and expand the state's existing advance payment practices for state grants and contracts with nonprofits. The bill would authorize an administering state agency to advance a payment to a recipient entity, defined to mean a private, nonprofit organization qualified under federal law, subject to meeting specified requirements. The bill would require the administering state agency to prioritize recipient entities and projects serving disadvantaged, low-income, and under-resourced communities, and to ensure an advance payment to the recipient entity does not exceed 25% of the total grant or contract amount.

AB 692 (Patterson) California Environmental Quality Act: Exemption: Egress Route Projects: Fire Safety

Introduced: 02/13/23, **Status:** Re-referred to Appropriations Committee

Summary: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency, as defined, to prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify the completion of an environmental impact report on a project that it proposes to carry out or approve that may have a significant effect on the environment or to adopt a negative declaration if it finds that the project will not have that effect. CEQA also requires a lead agency to prepare a mitigated negative declaration for a project that may have a significant effect on the environment if revisions in the project would avoid or mitigate that effect and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, would have a significant effect on the environment. This bill would, until January 1, 2030, exempt from CEQA egress route projects undertaken by a public agency to improve emergency access to and evacuation from a subdivision without a secondary egress route if the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has recommended the creation of a secondary access to the subdivision and certain conditions are met. The bill would require the lead agency to hold a noticed public meeting to hear and respond to public comments before determining that a project is exempt. The bill would require the lead agency, if it determines that a project is not subject to CEQA and approves or carries out that project, to file a notice of exemption with the Office of Planning and Research and with the clerk of the county in which the project will be located.

WILDFIRE

SB310 (Dodd) Prescribed Fire: Civil Liability: Cultural Burns

Introduced: 02/06/23 **Status:** Referred to Committees on Natural Resources and Water as well as Judiciary

Summary: This bill would authorize the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to enter into agreements with federally recognized California Native American tribes in support of tribal sovereignty with respect to cultural burning. Existing law provides that no person shall be liable for any fire suppression or other costs otherwise recoverable for a prescribed burn if specified conditions are met, including, among others, a burn boss, as certified through a certification program developed by the State Fire Marshal, has reviewed and approved a written prescription for the burn, the burn complies with that written prescription, and either the landowner has provided written permission or the governing body of a Native American tribe has given approval. Existing law also exempts cultural burns conducted by a cultural fire practitioner from those requirements.

This bill would revise and recast those provisions by expanding the definition of burn boss to also include a person qualified for specified positions through the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and limiting the tribal approval condition to the approval of the governing body of a California Native American tribe. The bill would also revise and recast the definitions of cultural burn and cultural fire practitioner by specifying that the definitions only apply to California Native American tribes. Existing law imposes various permitting requirements and prohibitions related to prescribed burns. This bill would authorize cultural fire practitioners to obtain approval to burn pursuant to a tribal law, ordinance, regulation, resolution, contract, agreement, or other similar mechanism adopted by a California Native American tribe within its ancestral territory. The bill would exempt those burns from those permitting requirements and related restrictions.

FEDERAL**The Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act (H.R. 803)**

Sponsor: Rep. DeGette, Diana [D-CO-1]

Introduced: 02/04/2021 **Status:** Received in Senate, Referred to Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

This package of bills, is championed in California by Reps. Carbajal, Chu, Huffman, and Schiff, and will protect one million acres of public land and more than 500 miles of rivers in the San Gabriel Mountains, the Santa Monica Mountains, the Central Coast and Northwest California, in addition to public lands and rivers in Arizona, Colorado, and Washington. It is a key step forward to ensuring equitable access to public lands and achieving California's and the nation's goals to conserve 30% of its lands and waters by 2030.

The bill also includes the Outdoors for All Act (Rep. Barragán), which codifies the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program. The ORLP program provides grants for outdoor recreational opportunities in urban and low-income cities nationwide. Together, these efforts are key to addressing the climate crisis, ensuring equitable access to public lands and supporting public health and economic recovery in California.

This legislation is also critical to achieving the goals outlined in President Biden's and Governor Newsom's recent Executive Orders to protect at least 30% of our land and waters by 2030 to address the climate and extinction crisis and build resilience. The White House supports the bill and stated it is consistent with these climate goals.

Last year, similar legislation to protect California public lands and rivers passed the House twice. Then-Senator Kamala Harris and Senator Dianne Feinstein also previously championed similar efforts in the Senate. Advocates are urging the Senate to move quickly to pass these protections this year. The bill includes protections for the following special wild places in California:

In the Los Angeles area, the bill would expand the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by over 109,000 acres to include the western Angeles National Forest. The bill would also designate over 30,000 acres as protected Wilderness and over 45 miles of Wild and Scenic rivers throughout the San Gabriel range. The bill would also establish a National Recreation Area in the San Gabriel Valley. (HR 693- Rep. Chu) The bill would add more than 191,000 acres of the Rim of the Valley Corridor to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The Rim of the Valley stretches from the Simi Hills and Santa Susanas to the Verdugos and on to the San Gabriel Mountains. This is a vital wildlife corridor for animals such as mountain lions, bobcats, and golden eagles.

PROJECTS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

River Ranger Program (AB 1558- C. Garcia): The River Ranger Pilot Program Project Team consisting of Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB), River in Action (RIA), and Nature for All (NFA) continues with its program implementation. Ersoylu Consulting started their evaluation services on the River Ranger Pilot Program with the first round of interviews held in March and April. Additionally, they prepared an evaluation survey focused on the planning and development phase of the program that was sent out in April to the Advisory Committee and program partners. The Project Team presented to the City of Bell Gardens Council in April to bring awareness of the program to the council, city staff and the local community. They are scheduled to present at the City of South Gate Council Meeting on May 23rd.

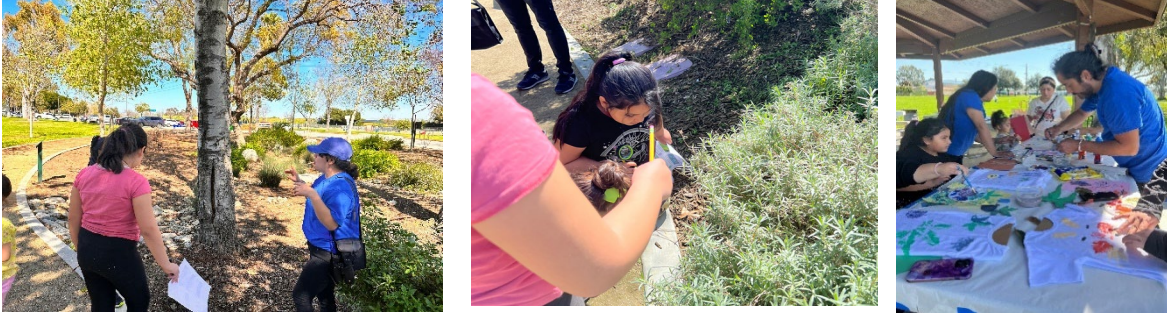
The second cohort of River Ambassadors began their 6-month training on February 13th, 2023. The second cohort has a regular schedule of education days on Tuesdays and field work and outreach from Wednesday to Friday, with outreach on selected Saturdays based on weekend community events. As part of the River Ambassador curriculum, the second cohort of River Ambassadors have received training on native and invasive plant identification, wildlife and nesting bird surveys, tree planting, and watershed/wetland ecology and public speaking. As part of their program, the River Ambassadors have attended a variety of lectures and training courses and have been involved in multiple community events, including Nature for All's Bike Along the River events. The River Ambassadors led an interpretative nature walk at Deforest Wetlands Park for bike event participants. River Ambassadors were also part of two Earth Day events, leading nature walks and involved in outreach with the community. CCLB staff are working with Rio Hondo Community College on developing a non-credit course for the River Ambassador program and currently finalizing the course curriculum and logistics with efforts to offer the course later this year.



CCLB activities and events

River in Action continues with their community based environmental education K-5 workshops and the distribution of the coloring book, "The Adventure of Roxanna and the Lower LA River Treasure Island Park." They are conducting STEAM workshops, field trips and outreach tabling events within the REACH Zone at the Lower LA River and Rio Hondo Confluence area throughout the year until February 2024 and are creating a new coloring book for their K-5 programming. Earlier this year, they organized a Water Museum Field Trip to the Water Replenishment District's Albert Robles Learning Center for youth and community members and hosted a table outreaching at the South Gate Farmers Market. On March 18th, they held a STEAM Leaf Arts Printing Workshop with a guided nature walk at Hollydale Regional Park. Youth and their families learned about the native flora/fauna and the design and function of bioswales and native landscapes. Students and their families participated in hands-on learning and created leaf print

t-shirts to take home. Participants shared their experience visiting the park and the desire for more public programming. RIA are hosting a Bird Outing Event on May 20th, 2023, at Hollydale Regional Park and are currently developing a birding program for the community in collaboration with the CCLB River Ambassadors and Nature for All.



River in Action activities and event

Nature for All hosted their 2nd LA River Bike Tour on March 25th in collaboration with Healthy Active Streets and donated bikes at the end of the event through Healthy Active Street's adopt a bike program with LA Metro. There were 21 participants including 3 youth that enjoyed the bike tour along the LA River bike path from Hollydale Regional Park to DeForest Park. An interpretative program at this event was also provided by CCLB River Ambassadors and Nature for All, which included an interpretative walk and discussions on their habitat restoration work in the area. From event surveys, a majority of participants felt they learned something new about the usage, plants and wildlife along the LA River and are likely to visit an outdoor space after participating in the event. NFA also hosted a LA River Walking Tour on April 1st, 2023, along the REACH Zone. They are hosting their 3rd LA River Bike Tour on May 20th. In June, N4A will provide interpretive programming at the SELA Art Festival taking place in the LA River.



Nature for All activities and event



On May 31, 2019, the Los Angeles River Ranger Program Establishment Plan was delivered to the State Legislature. The full report and supplemental documents may be downloaded at www.rmc.ca.gov. The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) established an agreement to implement Assembly Bill 1558 (AB 1558), also known as the River Ranger Bill, introduced by Assembly member Cristina Garcia (AD 58). The bill required both Conservancies to collaborate with multiple state and local agencies to develop a river ranger program to provide a network of river rangers along the entire 51-mile Los Angeles River and its tributaries. The Conservancies agreed to implement AB 1558 with support from their JPAs – WCA and MRCA.

The recommendations included establishing a pilot program along four reaches of the Los Angeles River, two in the upper portion of the river and two in the lower river. The first of the four reach zones to be established is at the confluence of the Rio Hondo with the Los Angeles River inclusive of the cities of South Gate, Downey and Bell Gardens. The reach zone is approximately five miles along the river corridor.

San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative: The Collaborative last met January 26, 2023. National Forest Foundation staff provided updates on funding opportunities for Collaborative facilitation and coordination, and efforts to support visitor use planning for the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. Matthew Bokach shared updates from the Angeles National Forest (ANF), including announcing new hires. Members of the Collaborative shared relevant updates and discussed 2023 priorities. WCA staff continue to participate in the ANF Visitor Reception Planning effort.

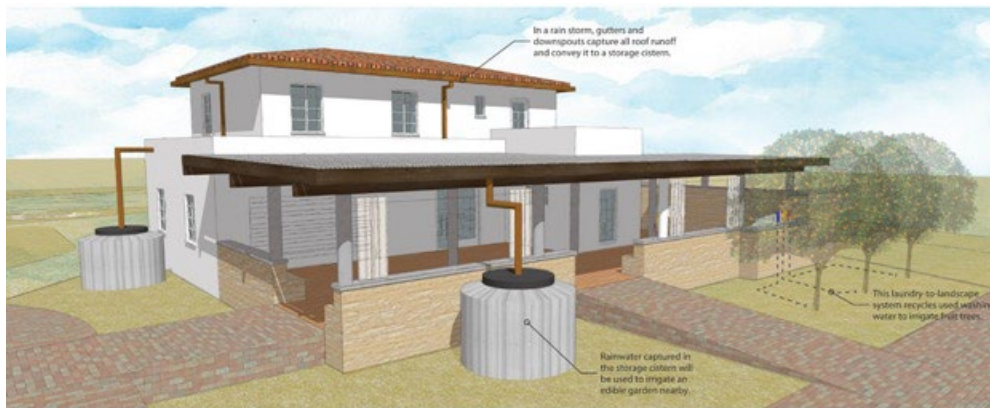


A SGMCC field trip to the Arroyo Seco in July 2022.

The SGMCC has a Steering Committee and topical ad-hoc Committees working to enhance National Monument management and accessibility for local communities in five areas: Trails and Recreation, Transportation, Volunteer Engagement, Conservation Education, and Forest Health. Meetings occur every other month.

WCA PROJECTS & PROPERTIES

San Gabriel River Center (River Park House) and Gardens Project: WCA staff and the Center’s design team are working through the permitting phase of the project. Many permits are complete or close to final clearance, however, some have presented challenges. The access road from Valley Blvd will require certification to meet “All Weather Access” requirements. This involves additional survey, geotechnical, and engineering work, as well as additional coordination / approvals from other agencies. The team has been working to address these challenges, respond to plan check comments, and resubmit drawing packages.



San Gabriel River Center and Demonstration Gardens

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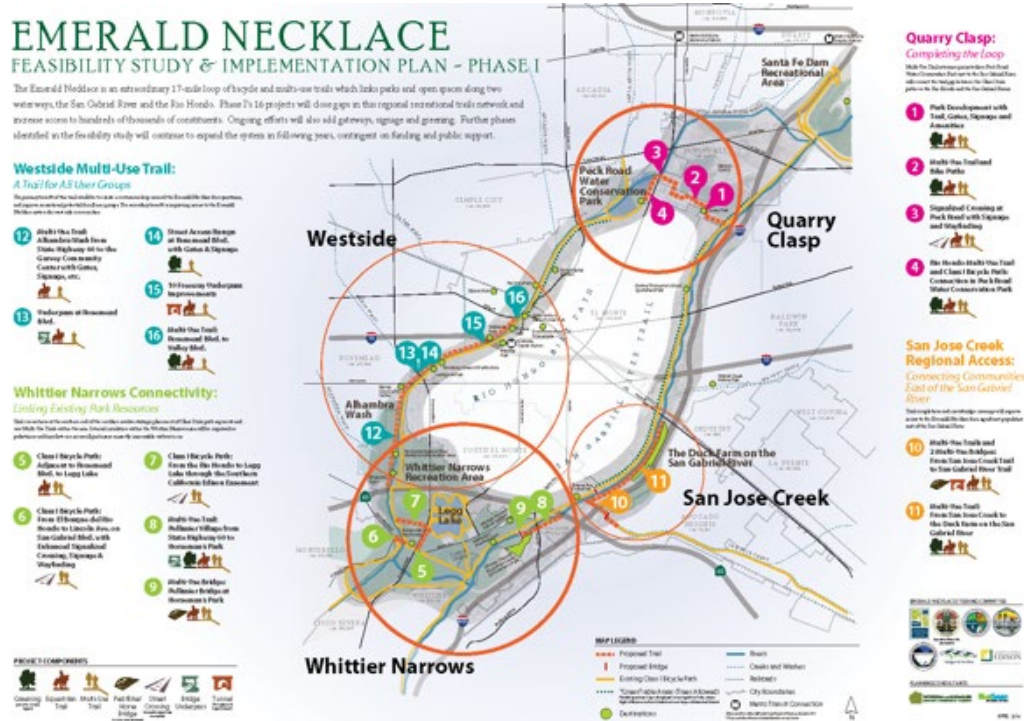
The San Gabriel River Center and Gardens Project will transform a 1929 Spanish colonial revival farmhouse into a water-wise educational resource and visitor center for the public. The surrounding demonstration gardens will include the construction of practical landscape-oriented water capture and conservation strategies that average homeowners can achieve in their own landscapes.

San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network Strategic Implementation Plan: The Plan is a multi-objective effort to transform existing Los Angeles County Flood Control District right of way in the San Gabriel Valley into a world-class Greenway Network in conjunction with identifying ways to upgrade and enhance the District's existing flood control facilities. The Plan will build upon the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments' (SGVCOG) ongoing Active Transportation Planning Initiative and will highlight connectivity with other planned active transportation components and green urban infrastructure projects throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

In support of plan development the WCA has facilitated community engagement at the local level as approved by the WCA Governing Board January 2021 through an agreement with the LA County Flood Control District October 2018.

The Plan will accelerate development of greenway design standards and create cooperative agreements with other agencies to expedite project delivery for shovel ready projects. This approach will enable simultaneous implementation of high priority greenway projects while ensuring consistency with the broader master planning of the Greenway Network.

Emerald Necklace: The last meeting was May 4, 2023. WCA staff provided updates on its Emerald Necklace projects in both construction and planning stages, including River Park, San Gabriel River Center and Gardens, and River Park Equestrian Center. The group will continue to meet quarterly to identify funding, prepare grant applications, and seek to partner to develop projects identified in the Emerald Necklace Plan.



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.

Mid/Upper San Gabriel River Technical Assistance and Planning: The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) has continued to monitor temperature sensors installed in the mid and upper San Gabriel River watershed to support a data model for ongoing temperature study. Inventory has also been ongoing by Stillwater Sciences for supplemental biological study and Balance Hydrologics for mapping and concept development for creeks, streams, and washes in the Mid/Upper San Gabriel Valley watershed.

The LA County Sanitation Districts have initiated a temperature study for surface water discharges into the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo watersheds. That study is to evaluate conditions and set plans for source control at the 5 water reclamation plants in these areas for actions spanning the next ten years. This

supplemental study is structured to support these efforts and serve as references for plan work, implementation, and site management across the Mid/Upper San Gabriel River watershed.

Lower Los Angeles River Technical Assistance: The WCA is working to facilitate realization and assistance for Lower LA River projects and stakeholder engagement. The WCA has been coordinating and regularly meeting with RMC staff, developing an inventory of potential projects, meeting and communicating with local city staff and funding partners, and working to identify and support project leads.

Lower Los Angeles River Technical Assistance is made possible by a technical services grant authorized by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) through the Proposition 68 Grant Program. The purpose of the project is to facilitate project realization along the Lower Los Angeles aligned with the Lower LA River Revitalization Master Plan (LLARRP), San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Common Ground, and watershed planning principles maximizing benefits for both local and regional communities.

Azusa Foothills Acquisitions and Interim Land Management Plan: This grant has concluded. A summary of project activities is available at https://www.wca.ca.gov/azusa_foothills .

Video clips and highlights from the stewardship workshops can be viewed at: https://www.wca.ca.gov/azusa_foothills_stewardship_plan

WCA staff continues to receive stakeholder feedback on the Azusa Foothills Open Space Stewardship Plan. When this feedback is incorporated into the plan, a download link will be added to the webpage above.



Hiking with California Native Plants with Brenda Kyle, Michael Garcia, and Azusa Beautiful; Canyon City Heritage with Suzanne Avila, MA

The Azusa Foothills open space acquisitions protect some of the last undeveloped private holdings along the foothills from development, in order to support watershed restoration, community-driven stewardship, and compatible public uses. WCA acquisition of these lands augments an existing cluster of contiguous public conservation lands in the Azusa Foothills that includes WCA's River Wilderness Park, Azusa-RMC Open Space, and City of Pasadena Open Space.

Mt Baldy Wilderness Preserve Fuel Modification: WCA made contact with an expert on amphibians who provided detailed information about an endemic salamander species which lives underground in the talus

slopes on the preserve. The expert is currently compiling additional information for WCA on herpetofauna in the region. WCA will seek to convene the expert with CalBG to discuss methods of removal of invasive species with protection of this elusive species. Broom removal activities are anticipated to recommence in July 2023.



Broom removal areas mapped by California Botanic Garden

Foothills Open Space Acquisition Stakeholder Engagement: The plan is currently being packaged along with additional interviews and analysis by WCA, into a condensed form suitable for public sharing and use in presentations. Stillwater Sciences presented the technical memo Aquatic habitat assessment in the San Gabriel River mainstem at the City of Azusa’s earth day Community Festival and Eco Fair in April 2023.

Crystal Lake Redevelopment and San Gabriel Canyon Master Planning: Work has been substantially completed on the demolition of an abandoned Warehouse, site clearance, and area development improvements at the Crystal Lake Visitor center for an outdoor courtyard with seating. Final punch-list elements are in-process. Additionally, WCA and USFS have finalized a Phase II Master Agreement to continue the partnership and collaborative planning and implementation of projects within the forest between the WCA and USFS.

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, a recreation master plan for the San Gabriel Canyon area focusing on access, circulation, and recreational resources. The implementation of maintenance and site improvements has been approved by USFS.

Parque Dos Rios Improvements Project: Additional interpretation panels have been installed, repairs made to gates, and work continues with the Conservation Corps of Long Beach River Ambassadors and MRCA rangers on establishing a presence and maintaining the site.

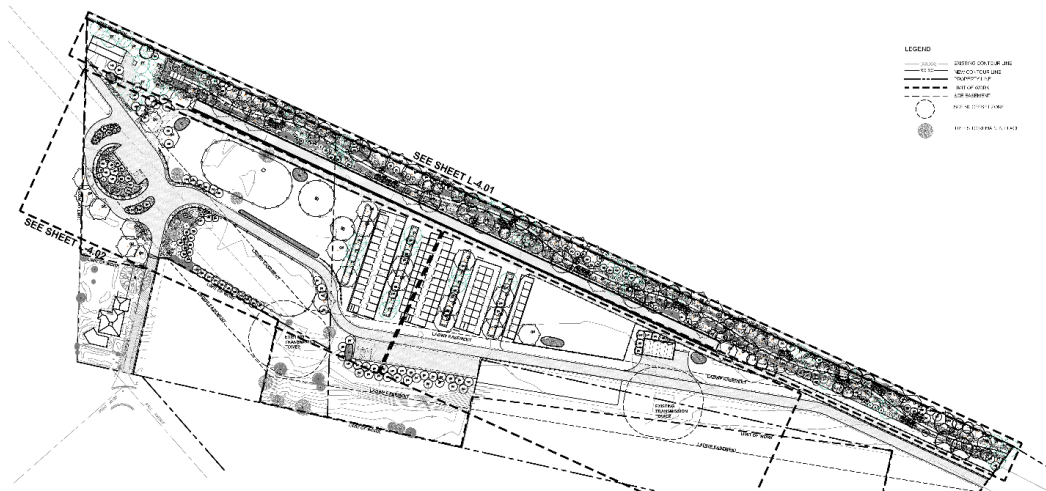


WCA staff continues to evaluate options for brownfield assessments and remediation to address subsurface legacy waste for approvals to complete revegetation of the wider site, and to advance potential project work for water management and habitat opportunities at this site and in the vicinity.



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 provides bike stops for the LLAR trail with overlooks, shade structure, seating, interpretive graphics, native plants and trees, and raptor perches.

Rio San Gabriel Equestrian Center: Los Angeles County Regional Planning has approved construction plans for the equestrian center, which includes an approximately sixty-foot wide, quarter-mile long swale in the vicinity of the historic flow path of Avocado Creek in addition to facility improvements. The construction drawing package has been prepared to submit for additional approvals pending funding for implementation.



The Rio San Gabriel Equestrian Center is an element of the wider River Park in La Puente/Avocado Heights leased by the WCA to a local operator serving an established LA County Equestrian District (EQD). Construction Drawings have been developed with funding through the Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project.

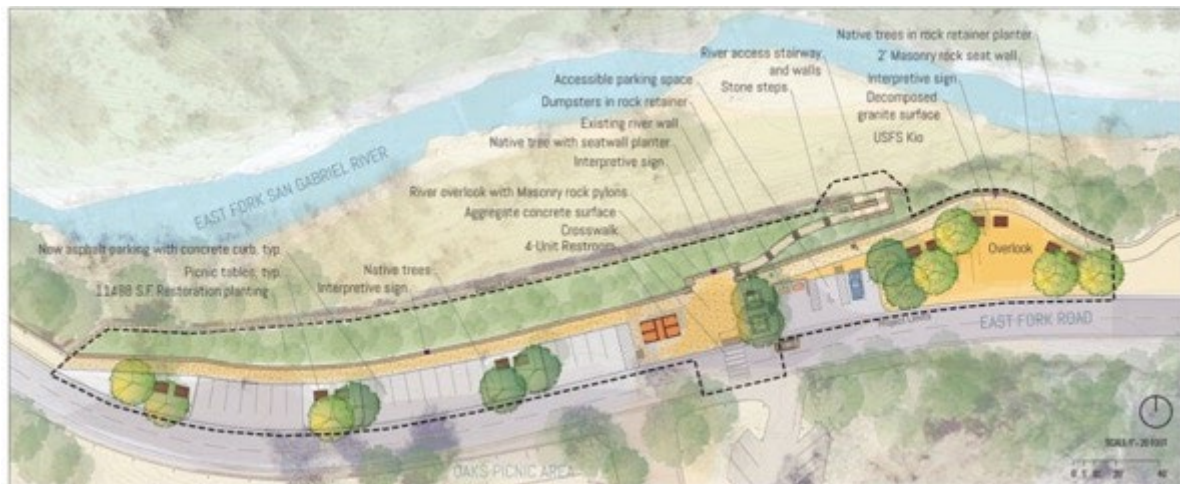
River Wilderness Park: Work continues to advance value engineering for construction funding secured and environmental compliance measures to break ground. Blackhawk Environmental has been awarded work for biological surveys of Least Bell’s Vireo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, and any other avian species observed which began last month in April. Additionally, the WCA has awarded work to Citadel EHS for aerially deposited lead study and compliance plan as approved by the WCA Governing Board on March 9, 2023.



The RWP is an approximately 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 which are the focus of the Entry Improvements project.

San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Project: WCA has contracted with Martin Kammerer Consulting to complete the remaining design work and move the project into permitting. The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy recently awarded the WCA with an additional \$2 Million in funding for project implementation.



Initial concept plan for the Oaks River Access project

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.

Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space: Southland Civil completed a legal description for WCA’s easement over Tzu Chi property to access WCA’s otherwise landlocked parcel. WCA’s application for a lot line adjustment was resubmitted along with required documentation formalizing WCA’s legal access over Tzu Chi property, and a lot line adjustment map stamped by the Department of Building and Safety. WCA is currently drafting a use and maintenance agreement for Tzu Chi’s road access over the WCA parcel.

