

DATE: March 23, 2015
TO: RMC Governing Board
FROM: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Item 7D: Project and Liaison Activities

Regional Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Planning: The Leadership Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis. The last meeting was held on January 28, 2015. The Committee is continuing to revise its Operating Guidelines and certain re-organizational items. For example each Sub-Regional Steering Committee has a chairperson, vice chairperson, and alternates. The Leadership Committee is considering a memorandum of understanding for these positions and making formal appointments for each. Former grantees that have received funding from previous IRWM grant rounds have been making presentations regarding the implementation status for their projects. At the January meeting, a presentation was given by the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority for the Marsh Park project, located in Cypress Park and the JWPCP Marshland Enhancement Project located in the South Bay, and the Whittier Narrows Water Reclamation Plant UV Disinfection Study implemented by the County of LA Sanitation Districts. There are also ongoing discussions regarding future opportunities including the group's success in obtaining grants to further its goals on integrated water management. Terri Grant, LA County Flood Control District recapped the opportunities as follows:

- 1) Goals & Objectives from the IRWM Plan: Review of the goals and objectives to determine how they are being met and how we can meet them in the future through the selection of future projects.
- 2) Quarterly Project Reviews: Incorporate quarterly project reviews as part of the Sub-Regional Steering Committee discussions.
- 3) Plan Performance & Monitoring Updates: Establish a plan performance and monitoring processes and continue to have projects presentations.
- 4) Outreach to EWMP Groups: Identify groups that can work with EWMP and integrated their participation in IRWM. Make presentations to EWMP groups on how to collaborate with IRWM.
- 5) Retreat: A retreat was suggested to provide information on IRWM.
- 6) Other Funding Sources: Identify federal and local funding to help meet goals. A review of philanthropic opportunities was suggested as another potential funding source.

The Department of Water Resources announced the release of the draft Guidelines and Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) for the 2015 Implementation Grant Solicitation funded by Proposition 84 (The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006).

This release of the draft Guidelines and the PSP opens the public comment period. The public comment period will close on April 24, 2015 at 5:00 PM. After 30 days of posting, DWR will hold two public meetings to review the contents of the documents and to receive comments. The workshop locations, dates, and the presentation materials will be posted at: <http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/p84implementation.cfm>

Finally, the Disadvantaged Communities Coordinator (DAC) is fully on board effective January 1, 2015 and has scheduled the first of a series of Water Dialogues for items relevant to water and the DAC Committee. The first dialogue took place on Friday March 15, 2015 in the City of Lynwood. Assemblymember Anthony Rendon (AD 63) is spearheading this speaker series and will be discussing two legislative bills: AB 615, The Center for Community Water Projects/ Provision of Technical Assistance to Disadvantaged Communities; and AB 530, Lower Los Angeles River Working Group. See flyer below for event details. The Water Dialogues are being coordinated by the Disadvantaged Communities Subcommittee of the Greater LA County Integrated Regional Water Management Group. Mark Stanley is the Chair of this Committee and oversees the work of the DAC Coordinator, Miguel Luna of DakeLuna. Additional information about the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan can be found at: <http://www.ladpw.org/wmd/irwmp/>

WATER DIALOGUE SPEAKER SERIES

Please join us for a discussion on disadvantaged communities, Integrated Water Management Planning in the region, open space, and strategies for public engagement.

When: Friday, March 13, 2015
Time: 11AM - 1PM
Where: Lynwood Bateman Hall
 Conference Room #1
 11331 Ernestine Avenue
 Lynwood, CA 90260

Lunch will be provided. Parking available on site.

Please RSVP to: Miguel Luna
miguel@dakeluna.com
 or visit: http://bit.ly/DAC_Water

This session is co-hosted by the City of Lynwood.

The Water Dialogue Speaker Series is coordinated by the:
 Disadvantaged Communities Subcommittee of the
 Greater LA County Integrated Regional Water Management Group

GUEST SPEAKER
 Honorable Assemblymember
 Anthony Rendon, District 63

TOPIC
 Proposed legislation to access
 funding from the recently
 voter approved water bond.
 AB615 - Technical Assistance
 for Disadvantaged Communities
 AB530 - Lower Los Angeles
 River Working Group

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 process is the preparation of an amendment process for the Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan, referred to as the Monument Management Plan. This planning document will guide how the monument resources and uses are to be managed for the next 10 to 15 years. Following the mandates set forth in the 2012 U.S. Forest Service Planning Rule, the process is mandated to include public input, including facilitation of transparent, thoughtful and frank deliberation and engagement of diverse perspectives and interest. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service is finalizing a public involvement plan. Forest Service staff also reports that the first

round of public meeting is tentatively anticipated between mid-April and early March. The focus of this first round of meetings will be public review of a 'need for change' document that outlines inconsistencies between the Monument Proclamation and the existing Forest Management Plan.

The second portion of planning activities is the establishment of a San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Collaborative. The purpose of this Collaborative is to represent the diverse stakeholder perspectives in identifying, prioritizing, advocating for investments, management objectives, and values that sustainably benefit the Angeles National Forest, the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, and the various communities throughout the region. Facilitated by the National Forest Foundation, the collaborative held its first general meeting in March 2015. The Collaborative included participation of Executive Officer Mark Stanley, representing the interests of the RMC and WCA.

San Gabriel National Recreation Area: The RMC 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 113th 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 RMC staff.

Although Congresswoman Judy Chu released draft legislation earlier this year for public comments, we are not currently aware of any public meeting or activities related to this topic. Staff will continue to monitor.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Lower Los Angeles River Bike Ride: RMC Staff coordinated a bike ride along the Lower portion of the Los Angeles River and the San Gabriel River which took place on Friday February 20, 2015 throughout Southeast Los Angeles County. Our special guest was Assemblymember Anthony Rendon (AD 63) and 25 invited participants to see a specific set of projects along these two rivers. Ride participants were given a geographical overview of the Lower LA River including several multi-benefit projects, specifically with water quality elements, accessible along these sections of the two rivers. Several of these projects have been funded in part with bond funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and a variety of other federal, state and local sources. The ride began in Maywood and ended along the San Gabriel River in the City of Lakewood where participants ate lunch and walked along the West San Gabriel Parkway project. The ride was approximately 19.2 miles which was also done in coordination with the LA County Flood Control District and Los Angeles Conservation Corps. Additional future bike rides are being planned along the upper San Gabriel River, and tributaries including the Rio Hondo and San Jose Creek.





Lower Los Angeles River Bike Ride- February 20, 2015

RMC ACTIVE PROJECTS

Gateway Cities Greenways and Rivers Master Plan (RMC 13002): 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 plan will provide the necessary momentum to pursue further investment for improvement along this lower section of the LA River as well as the Lower San Gabriel River on the scale that is currently planned for the LA River section through downtown Los Angeles.

Presentations were made to both the Gateway Council of Governments Planning Directors and City Managers in March 2015. Initial requests for data held by the cities has been made and as the program rolls out additional outreach will be conducted to collect and disseminate GIS and other planning documents and materials as the Master Plan develops.

In addition, the planning effort includes outreach and engagement to underserved communities, which will be conducted in collaboration with IRWMP DAC coordinator program.

Matching funds in the amount of \$250,000 provided by the RMC was awarded to the co-applicant on this project North East Trees. Additionally, \$250,000 in-kind services, and perhaps some cash contribution, were pledged by the Gateway Council of Governments and partner cities. To seamlessly implement the project and prepare a single cohesive master plan document the co-

applicants seek to enter into reciprocal contractual agreements with each other to complete the grant tasks.

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.

Azusa Geology Park (RMC10009): The City of Azusa, in cooperation with California Resource Connections (CRC) developed a City owned parcel into a geology interpretive park. The park is approximately 0.5-acre located east of the San Gabriel River Bike Trail and will create new access to the San Gabriel River regional bike trail connecting it to a quarter mile of underutilized City trail enhanced with native landscaping and interpretative signage. Construction was completed on December 30, 2013 but the City of Azusa and RMC are working together to complete the project and close out the grant by June 30, 2015. CRC requested a timeline extension through June 30, 2015 to close out the grant and to have the City take ownership of the park.

Coyote Creek-Los Alamitos Improvement Project (RMC3318): The City of Los Alamitos is in the process of working with LA County Flood Control District to update the existing Use Agreement for the bikeway to include operation and maintenance of the Coyote Creek river trail that runs through the city's limits. The update to the Use Agreement will support the planned bike way upgrade (paving, striping, and signage/gates) proposed by the City to complete the balance of the approved park project.

De Forest Park Wetland Restoration Project (RMC10006): This grant will restore wetland habitat for a 33.6 acre flood detention basin adjacent to the Los Angeles River with a degraded wetland dominated by exotic species. DeForest Wetlands project will restore the historic wetlands, scrub and woodland habitat, provide water quality improvements, passive recreational amenities and interpretive enhancement while retaining flood control properties to create a river parkway. Currently the City of Long Beach has received bids to construct the project but the bids exceed the funding available for this project, thus the City of Long Beach is proposing to phase the project and have the first phase of the project completed by June 30, 2016.

Camp Shiwaka Urban Forest and Discovery Trail (RMC 13005): RMC provided funding for the development and enhancement of Camp Fire's urban forest and a new trail at Camp Shiwaka which includes extensive native landscaping, interpretive signage, creation of vernal pools, improved ADA accessibility and additional improvements to the outdoor amphitheater. The grantee is anticipating completion of the projects in spring 2015.

Willowbrook Walking Path/Compton Creek (14003): The RMC will be providing a grant in the amount of \$300,000 to the Los Angeles Conservation Corps as part of the Willowbrook Walking Path Compton Creek extension. The LACC applied for an Urban Greening Grant through the Strategic Growth Council and was awarded the full request in the amount of \$798,815.

This project includes the creation of a ½ mile permeable walking path and 2,700 linear foot by 6 foot riprap swale constructed with river rock to capture debris and treat runoff before it enters Compton Creek. Other funding partners include the State Coastal Conservancy and the Office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas (2nd District). Matching funds provided by the funding partners and the grant funds received by the Strategic Growth Council bring the total project cost to \$1,698,815.

San Gabriel River Trail Signage Improvements (RMC12002): The outcome of this project is to improve interpretive signage along the San Gabriel River bike trail throughout the City of Azusa and include areas south of the Azusa Geology Park to the current trail end along Highway 39 near the entrance to the Azusa River Wilderness Park. The project elements will include; 1. Placement of mileage reference signage to key locations and features along the trail, 2. Re-design and replacement of insufficient interpretive signage along the San Gabriel River bike trail and 3. Installation of a “staging area” signs visible from Highway 39. Currently the grantee has completed design work of the interpretative signage but has requested a timeline extension through June 30, 2015 to close out the grant.

El Dorado Nature Center South Lake Restoration Project (RMC13004): The project is located at the El Dorado Nature Center in the City of Long Beach and includes an improved arrival experience with a new entry statement and signage, improvements to the outdoor amphitheater for educational sessions and events and an ADA compliant pedestrian bridge and trails leading from the parking lot entrance to the El Dorada Nature Center building. The City of Long Beach has completed the design work and public workshops to receive input for the proposed development.

WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Azusa River Wilderness Park Project: Design development for front entry improvements at the River Wilderness Park has entered into development of 30% construction documents. Included in this effort is the design development for approximately one half of the park, located closest to State Route 39. As identified in the adopted River Wilderness Park Master plan, the design work includes a proposed roundabout on State highway, extension of the Azusa Bike Path into the park, and other site programming that includes a pavilion, bathrooms, trail systems, river overlooks, an adventure play area, and a special use camp area. Signage and utility planning, undated CEQA analysis, and a concept development for a future concessioner building (café and retail space) is also included as part of this effort.

Citrus Grove Heights Bike Stop: This property is located along the San Gabriel River and trail, just north of Beverly Blvd in the City of Pico Rivera. The property was acquired through a Chapter 8 tax default sale by the County of Los Angeles by the MRCA on behalf of the WCA. MRCA has executed the grant deed and along with the WCA is working with the Title Company to clear any remaining title items before close of escrow scheduled for January 30, 2015.

Recent activities have included filing of Notice of Exemption with County of Los Angeles, thumbnail conceptual site development drawings, and processing of necessary documents to complete transfer of real property.

City of Los Alamitos' Coyote Creek River Parkway: The City of Los Alamitos is working with the contractor to complete reseeding and planting activities in areas that did not take initially as establishment activities continue.

Phase 2 of the project, utilizing grant savings, will involve bikeway improvements interpretive signage and potentially a decorative entry gates. The City has requested WCA's support to complete the interpretive features and facilitate communication with LA County Flood Control district in their placement and install.

Duck Farm Project: The Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) has processed the transfer of their pledged amount, in support of constructing the river overlook, to WCA's account with the County Auditor Controller.

AECOM, has not yet completed the pick-up of permit agency updates to Construction Documents. Once update is complete an updated Construction Document permit set will be submitted to each agency for final review, approval and issuance of permits or consent as applicable. Upon receipt of agency approvals, a For Construction set will be issued along with a Request for Bids posting.

WCA has received some interest by Green Technology entities to invest in the use of and demonstration of green products at the Duck Farm and potential capital improvements to the Farm house, equestrian center, maintenance barn and potential realization of the 'energy garden' concept for the entry park. Preliminary discussions with interest group is set to be held before the end of the month.

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 complete in late spring/early summer of 2015, and the final Program EIR is scheduled to be certified early 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 aggregated 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.

Mt Baldy Habitat & Open Space: With the completion of the property acquisition of 237 +/- acres, staff has finalized informational and operational signs which will be installed via an Eagle Scout project before the end of May.



San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Project: The Cattle Canyon Project seeks to address unsustainable recreation practices, which include 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.

Included within the current Phase 1 of Cattle Canyon Project are 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 former of these two elements, the planning study, includes a comprehensive site assessment and conceptual planning process that has identified opportunities for physical improvements, and to a lesser extent, management considerations that will improve site conditions.

Current project activity relates to the planning process. Following the completion of site assessments and a feasibility analysis, BlueGreen Consulting, the lead planning and design consultant on the project, has begun preparing three conceptual alternative plans, focusing primarily on physical site improvements. Each of the three alternatives will present different levels of programming that accommodate different levels of use. These alternatives will be refined based on comments from the advisory committee, as well as targeted stakeholder outreach. Once the final three alternatives are prepared, which is anticipated for be sometime in June, a public input process will begin to develop a preferred plan. Detailed of this public input process are still yet to be determined, including funding, but staff anticipates a collaborative effort with the U.S. Forest service.

South Gate Habitat Restoration Project/Parque dos Rios: Additional plan set comments have been received from City of South Gate and are being implemented into the plan set by the design consultant North East Trees. Once permits have been secured, WCA staff will coordinate with Willdan to complete the construction bid process. WCA has submitted an informal request to LACFCD for their consideration to utilize their water line to irrigate the proposed park during its establishment period before being released from supplemental water.

Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space: Acquired in 2008, the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space Property is a total of 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.

Prior to beginning the Prop A funded phase 1 development of the conceptual plan, the City issued a contract for CEQA analysis and document preparation. The City and WCA has also agreed that the WCA will act as the lead agency to CEQA although the City will fund the CEQA planning consult fees. Prior to proceeding with the CEQA analysis, the WCA and City will enter into an MOU pertaining to the phase 1 development and management.

The WCA also continues to work with the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, an adjacent property owner, to address potential lot-line adjustments, land swaps, and utility easement issues. An agreement addressing all of these matters is seen as a necessary precursor to completion of the Phase 1 development.

SAN GABRIEL RIVER DISCOVERY CENTER AUTHORITY

San Gabriel River Discovery Center: The SGRDCA Governing Board meeting took place on December 17, 2014. The Board approved a preferred alternative for the construction of the SGR Discovery Center, acceptance of funding and services provided for information dissemination, approval of an audit services contract, acceptance of Open Space District funds from the County of Los Angeles, adoption of an updated project workplan for SGRDCA SEP fund expenditure, approval of an agreement for delivery of EcoVoices program services and approval of budgetary expenditures.

LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS AUTHORITY

The LCWA hired Moffatt & Nichol to complete the restoration feasibility study for the entire Los Cerritos Wetlands and the anticipated completion date is early Fall 2015. Several technical studies such as the Biological Resources and Watershed Impacts Reports have been completed and are posted on the CRP website, <http://intoloscerritoswetlands.org>. Currently the LCWA is restoring Zedler Marsh through several grants that were awarded in 2014 including the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District, Fourth Supervisorial District Prop A Funds and RMC Trails Grant. In addition, the LCWA has also entered into contract with Orange County Flood Control District to provide Wetland Restoration Services and Supplies. Following are the upcoming public events for Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewardship Program.



Presented by:



Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority

**January - June 2015
Public Event Calendar**

**ALL PUBLIC EVENTS MEET AT THE
CORNER OF 1ST & PCH IN SEAL BEACH**
See map on reverse for location

Participate in the **exploration** and **ecological restoration** of 200 acres of coastal habitat at **Los Cerritos Wetlands**
Service-learning credits are provided at all events.

The wetlands are wildlands; please dress accordingly. **Closed toed shoes required.** We encourage reusable water containers.
Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

To learn more about the habitats and animals of Los Cerritos Wetlands, please check our websites:
www.intoloscerritoswetlands.org
www.lcwetlands.org
saveloscerritoswetlands on Facebook

To request a restoration or education event for your group or organization, please contact:
iwanttohelp@TidalInfluence.com

Upcoming Public Events

Monthly Habitat Restorations:
LCW Land Trust & Aquarium of the Pacific sponsor our Zedler Marsh restoration planting events
10:30am-12:30pm on the 1st Saturday of each month .
Upcoming dates: Sat. Jan 3rd, Feb 7th, Mar 7th, Apr 4th, May 2nd, June 6th
Participants are eligible to win a free ticket to the Aquarium of the Pacific and other prizes!

Wetlands Property Land Tours:
LCW Land Trust sponsors our Land Tour program
8:00 am – 10:00am on the 1st Saturday of each month.
Contact ejlambe@verizon.net for tour details.
Upcoming dates: Sat. Jan 3rd, Feb 7th, Mar 7th, Apr 4th, May 2nd, June 6th

Special Events:
El Dorado Audubon sponsors a monthly Bird Walk
Starting at 8:00am on the 2nd Saturday of each month.
Contact eldoradoaudubon@yahoo.com for tour details.

LCW Land Trust sponsors our Kayak Tour program
9:00am – 12:00pm on certain weekend days each month.
Contact ejlambe@verizon.net for tour details.

Thanks to Our Partners in Conservation:

