

**DATE:** April 29, 2019

**TO:** RMC Governing Board

**FROM:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Item 9D: Liaison and Activities Report

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### RMC ACTIVITIES

#### Lower Los Angeles River Working Group (AB 530):

With the completion of the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan, the Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) held its first meeting on August 22, 2018 at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works headquarters in the City of Alhambra. The purpose and charge of the IAG is to:

- 1) provide a public venue for discussion of proposed projects/programs related to the Lower LA River;
- 2) Ensure proposed projects/programs are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan; and
- 3) Maximize multi-use opportunities and community benefits by encouraging collaboration among the many project proponents and organizations in the project area.

In its role as an advisory body, the IAG will provide guidance on issues presented before them, but ultimately, individual entities with jurisdiction along the river corridor including the LA County Flood Control District, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the cities will continue to have decision-making authority. The IAG members and committees will work together to further define the roles and guidelines of the IAG in the upcoming months.

The IAG will include four sub-committees, including:

- 1) Programs & Policies;
- 2) Public Realm, Environment, Water, Infrastructure;
- 3) Public Advisory & Community Engagement; and
- 4) Future Committee TBD (as-needed).

The committee meetings will first be comprised of members of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan Working Group; however, the committees may choose to invite representatives of other agencies and organizations as needed to address committee needs.

Steering and sub-committee meetings will be held quarterly. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for **May 22<sup>nd</sup>** at the Gateway COG offices in Paramount. The sub-committee meetings are scheduled for:

- 1) Programs & Policies
  - a. Chair, Antonio Hicks, Public Counsel
  - b. Vice Chair, Dan Knapp, Conservation Corps of Long Beach
  - c. Meeting and Facility: Tuesday, **April 16<sup>th</sup>**, 2019, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
Location TBD
- 2) Public Realm, Environment, Water, Infrastructure
  - a. Chair, Kayla Kelly-Slatten, Conservation Corps of Long Beach
  - b. Vice Chair, Kelsey Jessup, The Nature Conservancy

- c. Meeting and Facility: Tuesday, **April 9<sup>th</sup>**, 2019, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
Conservation Corps of Long Beach, 340 Nieto Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90814
- 3) Public Advisory & Community Engagement
  - a. Chair, Laura Cortez, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
  - b. Vice Chair, TBD
  - c. Meeting and Facility: Tuesday, **April 16<sup>th</sup>**, 2019, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
Location TBD

All committees are continuing to work on establishing a project review process and will discuss how each committee can support the development and implementation of projects, programs, policies, and efforts. Regarding a review process, the two main objectives for the sub-committees will be to:

- 1) Allow projects that have been submitted for funding to present and retain feedback, which will then be delivered to a governing Board/reviewing body for consideration, and
- 2) Allow developing projects the opportunity to gain feedback on concepts and ideas, as well as to find additional partners and funding.

RMC is scheduling proposed project presentations by RMC grant applicants before the appropriate IAG committees to allow Lower LA River stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed projects before they are recommended for funding to the RMC Board. Any comments received on projects will be included in recommendation reports.

*The IAG consists of the District as the chair, the RMC, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the fifteen Lower LA River cities and the chairs of the committees. The IAG and the committees will each meet quarterly. All meeting materials and schedules will be posted on the website – [www.LowerLARiver.org](http://www.LowerLARiver.org)*

#### River Ranger Program (AB 1558- C. Garcia)

Since February 2018, The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and their respective JPA's (WCA and MRCA) have been collaborating jointly on the implementation of the River Ranger Plan Development, intended to develop a framework for a network of River Rangers who assist the public at sites along the Los Angeles River and its tributaries. The bill was enacted in 2017 to address the limited contact with and responsibility for the river by communities, working in coordination with current revitalization programs to encourage engagement with the river as a welcoming community resource.

Under the bill, the program is intended to do the following: Establish a Los Angeles River identity; Improve public safety for visitors; Foster collaboration among those with jurisdiction over the river; Protect parks, open space, and other public space; Engage communities in the protection and preservation of the River and its resources; Promote diversity and inclusion; Promote equal access and equity among all communities along the River with regard to the development and placement of improvements along the river; Monitor the physical conditions, environmental health, and development of green space along the River, and Coordinate the work of river rangers with programs and services.

A total of 6 Stakeholder meetings have taken place since 2018, consisting of all 23 cities that are located along the 51-mile length of the LA River, and NGO's representing water, environment, youth, and natural resources. The last meeting took place on February 27, 2019, where the framework for the plan and program roll-out were presented, and stakeholders had the opportunity to suggest potential Program roll-out locations. An Executive Summary of the River Ranger Plan was submitted to the Assembly Committee for Water, Parks & Wildlife and the Senate Committee for Natural Resources and Water on March 29, 2019.

A final River Ranger Plan will be submitted by May, 2019. More details below including WCA's involvement.

California Secretary for Natural Resource: Wade Crowfoot – Lower LA River Briefing and South Gate Tour

On April 5, 2019, RMC, along with River LA, City of South Gate, Speaker Rendon's office, and DakeLuna, coordinated a bus tour of the Lower LA River and South Gate with the new Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. RMC provided an overview of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan process and on-going implementation efforts. County Public Works provided an update on the LA River Master Plan. City of South Gate also highlighted efforts in their City. Tour also included Supervisor Solis' district reps.



### Contract Cities Board Meeting



On April 17, 2019, RMC Staff attended the California Contract Cities Association (CCCA) Board Meeting at the confluence of the Rio Hondo and Los Angeles Rivers. This meeting was RMC Board Member Jorge Morales' last meeting as the President of the CCCA. Work along the LA River was highlighted as part of the meeting program, and RMC Staff presented about the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan and about the River Ranger Program. There was also a guest appearance by Frank Gehry who presented his vision and work along the LA River. After the presentations, Board Member Morales was honored by the guests from cities in the CCCA, local elected officials, and the Speaker of the Assembly. Board Member Liz Riley was also in attendance at the event.



### South & Southeast LA School Water Equity School Project (SLAWESP)

A new water equity project for South LA and Southeast Schools is underway with a group of water solutions advocates and funders. On January 4, 2019, advocates came together for a strategic planning session to define the project and create a framework around elementary and high schools within the Southeast LA and South LA region. Discussions included: Building Community Awareness, Rebuilding the Water Infrastructure, Building Careers, and Creating Jobs and Business Opportunities. The working meeting also highlighted several challenges and opportunities for school sites. For example, schools may soon have to comply with MS4 requirements (they're currently exempt) such as capturing "first flush" stormwater on-site. Such challenges provide opportunities to leverage park, green infrastructure, and open space agencies, planning efforts and funds (local, state, and federal) to support these efforts. RMC will continue to follow and engage school equity projects. The next meeting will take place on February 6, 2019 at CD Tech in Los Angeles. The meeting outcomes will include:

- 1) Identifying pilot schools/strategy
- 2) Identifying career exposure curricula and workforce opportunities
- 3) Identifying exemplar/potential green infrastructure/water projects
- 4) Framework for community engagement.

### **RMC ACTIVE PROJECTS**

The Magic Johnson Park Groundbreaking took place on Saturday March 9, 2019 and included the participation of the Willowbrook community, 2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisorial District Supervisor, Mark Ridley-Thomas, John Wicker, Director of the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation, Mark Pestrella, Director of the Department of Public Works, the Housing Authority of Los Angeles County, and Mark Stanley representing the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. At its Board meeting in July 2018, the RMC Board approved of a grant to the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation for the Earvin Magic Johnson Stormwater Management Project, in the amount of \$3,000,000, using Proposition 1 (Water Bond) funding.



The grant will go towards the water infrastructure improvements and sustainability efforts in the reconfiguration of the park's South Lake, and includes the creation of a biofiltration garden that will integrate native riparian vegetation to imitate a natural wetland. This project is part of a larger Master Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2016 and will be completed in Phases. This first phase will include much needed park improvements including a community event center, splash pad, wedding pavilion, children's play area, walking paths, and the water quality improvements for the South Lake. The full plan can be found here: <http://parks.lacounty.gov/earvin-magic-johnson-park-master-plan/>



Please Join  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
and distinguished guests for a

**GROUNDBREAKING**  
*Celebration at*

**Magic Johnson Park**

New amenities include:

- Community Event Center
- Wedding Pavilion
- Splash Pad
- Children's Play Area
- Walking Paths
- Enhanced South Lake
- Water Quality Improvements

**Saturday, March 9, 2019**  
**10AM**

905 E El Segundo Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90059  
(Enter the park from South Avalon Blvd.)

For more information contact:  
Lacey Johnson at (213) 974-2222

~ Refreshments will be provided ~

Willowbrook Walking Path/Compton Creek (RMC14003): The RMC provided 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. Additional matching funds were committed by other project partners including 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.

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.

Work began on this project in September 2018 with grubbing of the site. The LACC will continue the grading and move on to construction of a fence line, retaining wall, and landscaping for a targeted project completion in June 2020.

View Park and Recycled Water System Development Project (RMC17001): The View Park and Recycled Water Development Project is underway. Project grant to the City is for \$2,000,000 which includes a wildlife corridor project in the City of Signal Hill that will establish a new 1.86 acre park and the associated construction of a recycled water system. The project will reclaim a municipally owned industrial site and provide a recycled water system to serve the proposed park as well as retrofit three existing parks and the

Promontory Home Owner's Association common landscaped areas, connect an urban trail system, prevent runoff pollution from contaminating the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers and annually save approximately 40- acre feet of potable water.

Recycled Water Campus, San Gabriel River Parkway (RMC 17004): Grant was approved by RMC Board and the project is underway. Grant from the RMC is for \$1,000,000.

This project supports low-impact development stormwater management features, such as swales, landscaping and permeable pavements and walkways; a stormwater capture system to augment the recycled water supply and reduce flood risk. In addition, this project will create habitat for Monarch butterflies, a migratory species proposed for endangered species candidate status; and create 3.5 acres of park-like open space with public access to the San Gabriel River. The project includes many interpretive and education aspects with an outdoor amphitheater, demonstration gardens for native plants, a working model of the San Gabriel River, eco-friendly garden, multi-lingual signage, and other visitor facilities focused on water education, and provides multiple benefits to economically disadvantaged communities. This project is part of the Groundwater Reliability Improvement Project (GRIP), fully funded at \$119 million. GRIP broke ground in July 2016 and is now known as the ARC Project.

The WRD has requested a timeline extension through December 2019, due to a delay resulting from rain storms in 2017 that occurred when earth work was taking place at the construction site. In addition, compliance with American Iron and Steel requirements mandated by the project's financing, made it necessary to change the source for some construction products. However, the project is scheduled to be completed in early July 2019. WRD is working with a non-profit partner, Amigos de los Rios, to complete the interpretive signs and material for the outdoor spaces. WRD has requested additional time to close out the grant through December 2019.

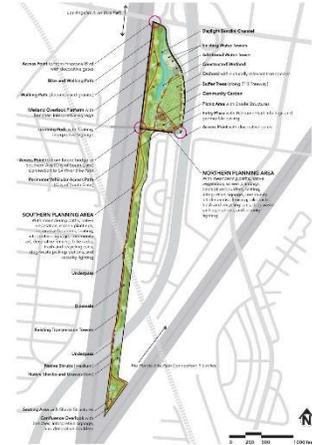
Bassett High School Campus Green Infrastructure Project (RMC 17005): Grant from the RMC is for \$652,520, project is underway. This project will enhance campus "green infrastructure", urban habitat, and demonstrate sustainable public landscaping in terms of water use, improved infiltration, and storm water management. Bassett High School is located in underserved area of La Puente, in San Gabriel River sub watershed. The region's impervious grey infrastructure impairs groundwater recharge and infiltration. Proposed Green Infrastructure retrofits will reduce water use on campus by systematic turf grass reduction: planting over 2700 native, drought-tolerant trees & shrubs in mulched planters to enhance biodiversity, and absorb storm water and run-off. Creating a thriving Urban Forest on campus will clean air and sequester greenhouse gas emissions and reduce Urban Heat Island Effect through shade cover. Creation of bioswales, and strategic permeable surface retrofits will collect, capture, and infiltrate storm water from campus preventing runoff from entering storm drain systems and impacting our watershed's health. Interpretive elements will raise awareness of water resources challenges and help create the next generation of environmental stewards. The project will encourage underserved students and community residents to participate in habitat restoration and water resources protection, explore and enjoy the campus, and learn how to connect to the region's surrounding natural areas.

Amigos has finalized an agreement with the school district and has worked with County Public Works to present plans and work with the school district. Amigos continued site preparation including grass kill within the field; continued to refine construction documents, refining grading plan, bioswale system, and BMP swale landscape details; and continued to water and care for trees planted in last quarter.

Planning for the Urban Orchard Development (17006): Planning for the Urban Orchard Development grant to the Trust for Public Land is in the amount of \$845,000 and is an exciting project that will transform 30

acres of unused, vacant land between the I-710 Freeway and the LA River into new, critically needed green infrastructure and an urban park, including an urban orchard and over one-mile of new riverfront walking and bike paths. Project deliverables include a detailed concept plan for the 30-acre park site, a feasibility study to determine the most appropriate stormwater best management practices to be utilized at the site, and a complete set of construction drawings for the 7 acres park project area that include an orchard with culturally-relevant tree species, community gathering spaces, picnic areas, interpretive elements, native plants, and walking and bicycle paths that will eventually connect with the existing bike path along the LA River.

The City continues to host public workshops to receive input from the community for this project and has also received grant funds for the project implementation. The most recent community design meeting was held on January 19, 2019 in the City of South Gate. In January, RMC Board Item 10 addresses TPL's request for a grant amendment including a 1-year performance period extension from June 30, 2019 to June 30, 2020 and reduction in project scope. TPL is requesting to extend the grant to allow sufficient time to complete 100% construction drawings for the 7 acres and the stormwater management system that includes pumping water from the Bandini Channel and obtaining permits for the constructed wetland and diversion structure from the Bandini Channel.



**West Coyote Hills Open Space Acquisition (17007):** Grant to the City is in the amount of \$2,000,000 for this acquisition. The City of Fullerton informed the RMC that they were successful in obtaining \$13 million in funds to acquire the 38.3 acres of available remaining undeveloped land. The City is working with the Coastal Conservancy to receive those funds and begin the process of land acquisition.

**Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (LB MUST) Project (RMC 17009):** The Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (LB-MUST) Project is underway, this grant to the City is for \$2,000,000 and will improve water quality by intercepting and treating the dry weather flows and a portion of the first flush of stormwater runoff normally discharging into the Los Angeles River. The byproduct of the LB-MUST water quality treatment is recycled water which can be used to sustain proposed wetlands riparian habitat. The wetlands will be part of the total treatment train of the LB-MUST as well as function as a storage basin for the recycled water. The City is 60% complete with the final design specifications and construction is expected to begin Spring of 2019.

**Parkway Basin Water Quality Improvement Project (17011):** The Parkway Basin Water Quality Improvement Project grant to the County of Los Angeles is in the amount of \$268,500 and includes the construction of 30 parkway basins in the unincorporated Los Angeles County. A Parkway is typically defined as the area between a road's curb and the sidewalk. Parkway basins are designed to capture and treat stormwater and dry season flow (urban runoff), utilizing urban runoff for irrigation and facilitating infiltration to groundwater. These basins are constructed by excavating and lowering a portion of parkway, then cutting an opening in the curb to facilitate the flow of water from the street. The basins contain rock reinforced slopes to prevent erosion, along with the vegetation which will detain, remediate, and help infiltrate urban runoff. When a basin is full, any additional urban runoff will be unable to enter and will continue to travel in the gutter eventually to the storm drain system. Parkway basins have been successfully constructed for many years in numerous cities including: Tucson, Arizona; New York City; Portland, Oregon; and other municipalities. Locally, parkway basins have been constructed successfully in Panorama City and Studio City.

The identification of priority sites and project locations (task 1) was completed in January 2018. Task 2 involves engaging residents and selecting the top 30 project sites. Due to a change in project sequencing, the outreach effort to obtain 30 signed stewardship agreement at 30 project sites will be split into three different phases within three communities—this task is to be completed by June 2019. The remaining tasks which include soil testing (task 3) and design plans, permitting, and design review (task 4), will be phased like the outreach sequencing. The River Project has submitted a road construction permit application for its first site (Q3 2018) and will utilize the construction as an introductory workshop to demonstrate the project to other interested residents. It is anticipated that County will complete the outreach, design, and construction of the parkway basins through Summer 2019.

Los Cerritos Wetlands Acquisition of the Bryant Properties (RMC 17013): This grant to the LCWA is in the amount of \$1,000,000. The Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA) currently owns approximately 177 acres of coastal wetland habitat within the Lower San Gabriel River watershed in the Cities of Seal Beach and Long Beach and the LCWA is seeking to acquire the frontage and remaining Bryant-Dakin, LLC Properties located along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Westminster Avenue in the City of Long Beach, totaling approximately 18 acres (Los County Assessor Parcel Nos 7237-020-053 and 7237-020-054). The LCWA is seeking to acquire the remaining two Bryant-Dakin LLC retained parcels that extend across the San Gabriel River and along the Haynes Cooling Channel at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Westminster Avenue. The west parcel is approximately 12 acres in size and is south along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Westminster Avenue and the east parcel is approximately 6 acres located on the isthmus just north of the LCWA Property on the east side of the San Gabriel River.

LCWA received approval from the Department of General Services on an appraisal report on the Bryant Properties. They are still negotiating with the land owner to acquire the properties.

Los Cerritos Wetlands Planning and Restoration Project (17014): This grant is to the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (LCWA) in the amount of \$500,000. The Los Cerritos Wetlands is one of the last remaining estuarine systems in southern California, located in the Cities of Long Beach and Seal Beach. The LCWA adopted the Final Los Cerritos Wetlands Complex Conceptual Restoration Plan (CRP) in August 2015 with the next step being environmental review of the CRP. The LCWA is seeking to complete the environmental review of the CRP which is required to satisfy the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

A meeting with the Steering Committee, two Technical Advisory Meeting, and two public meetings have been held to solicit comments about an Optimized Restoration Plan, which is a hybrid alternative from the CRP's three alternatives. The CEQA approach is to complete a Programmatic EIR for the entire 500-acre property. The CEQA process was initiated on March 8, 2019 with the filing of the Notice of Preparation and Initial Study. The Scoping Meeting was held on March 21, 2019 from 7:00 – 8:30pm at the Recreation Park Community Center in Long Beach. The comment period for the NOP closed on April 8, 2019. LCWA is reviewing those comments and working to complete the DEIR with the associated analyses.

Emerald Necklace Rio Hondo and Peck Park Water Conservation Project (RMC 17015): Grant to Amigos de los Rios in the amount of \$617,385 for this project which will enhance biodiversity, water quality, stormwater & urban run-off management along Rio Hondo Emerald necklace & within Peck Park by adding green infrastructure elements along River Parkway. This area is located within eastern Los Angeles County's underserved El Monte and is adjacent to County Bike Trail, residential areas and schools. Arterials cross the right of way and produce runoff and air pollution that negatively impacts river parkway and local ecosystems. The proposed multi-objective water quality project will improve watershed health, habitat, and trails along the Emerald Necklace's Rio Hondo River. It will remove invasive plants and restore biodiversity by planting over 1175 native & drought-tolerant trees and shrubs suited to multi-year droughts.

Significant invasive removal has been completed, with the monitoring, treating, and removing of previously removed areas continuing. 1205 shrubs and 105 trees have been planted. Tree stakes were installed for trees previously planted; shrubs cared for. Regarding the retrofit of Peck Park's parking lot and creation of a bioswale adjacent to the parking lot, Amigos has submitted a parking lot concept plan to LA County Department of Public Works' Flood Control District and Army Corps of Engineers for review and approval. Amigos continues to host regular Emerald Necklace stewardship events, provides weekly updates to their base of supporters (through email and Facebook) to boost awareness of green infrastructure work at Peck Road Park as well.

Lynwood Park Infiltration, Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Project (RMC 17017):

Grant to the City of Lynwood in the amount of \$1,692,575. The Lynwood Park Infiltration, Restoration, and Water Quality Improvement Project will replace the parking lot asphalt at Lynwood Park with permeable pavers; establishment of green space with native plants and shrubs in the parking lot perimeter; and installation of a bio-swale along the parking lot median, to improve stormwater management. This project is part of the Gateway Cities Regional Recycled Water System Expansion Project. The City of Lynwood along with 2 other cities in the southeast area of Los Angeles County and Central Basin received a grant to complete the design for an extension of the Central Basin recycled water system. This design has been completed and includes a stub out at Lynwood Park. Additional Funding for construction is being sought by the city.

Phil and Nell Soto Park (RMC17018):

On September 27, 2018, the City of Pomona conducted the official groundbreaking for the Phil and Nell Soto Park in the City of Pomona. The 1.76 acre park will provide for active and passive recreation opportunities and includes a variety of California native plants and trees throughout the park, a butterfly habitat, and a bird sanctuary.

The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy provided a grant for the acquisition of this park and the City has recently accepted an additional grant in the amount of \$1 Million for the park construction from Proposition 1 (water bond). The park design includes natural systems to treat urban stormwater runoff, infiltration and retention of stormwater to mitigate flooding. The park was designed by Architerra Design Group and the Construction will be managed by CEM Construction. Completion is anticipated in Summer 2019.

San Gabriel Mountain Community Collaborative (RMC17024):

The San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative (SGMCC) will hold its next meeting on Thursday March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019, from 9am-1pm, at the Altadena Community Center. At the previous meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, there was a request to have members give very short, 3-minute "lightning talks" at future meetings so that SGMCC can learn more about each other's organizations, missions, and priorities. These are going to be built into the meeting agendas for the rest of the year. The plan is to do approximately six lightning talks per meeting.

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

Pacific Visions – Aquarium of the Pacific (RMC17026):

The AOP is developing a series of exhibits and interactive Experiences as part of its current expansion, Pacific Visions that will allow visitors to explore the interactions among food, water, and energy in California. A media event is being planned on May 22, 2019 at the Aquarium for all the key financial supporters for this expansion currently underway. RMC Board is welcome to attend.

Compton Creek Walking Path Phase II (RMC 18001)

Provide an extension of the walking/cycling path which leads to the Compton Bike Trail.

Sleepy Lagoon Planning Project (RMC 18003)

The outreach, design and planning process will involve a collaboration with a number of organizations and agencies including Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), La Cosecha Colectiva (the Collective Harvest) and various local homeowner associations near Bell and surrounding cities. Discussions with the grantee are underway to initiate this planning and implementation grant.

Trask Reservation Water System Improvement Project (RMC 18006)

The Boy Scouts of America, Greater LA Area Council, (GLAAC BSA) requested funding from RMC to hire an engineering consultant to determine the camp's various water system needs and provide an engineering estimate of expected costs. The resulting report will enable GLAAC BSA to pursue additional funding opportunities to move forward with the necessary procurement, installation, and construction of the proposed improvements and upgrades, and ultimately restore the camp's potable water access.

RMC is awaiting notice if GLAAC BSA sent and received approval on the preliminary design by DDW to continue moving towards 30% design.

Walnut Park Acquisition (RMC 18007)

This grant was recently approved at the January 28, 2019 RMC Board meeting to provide a grant to the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation for the Walnut Park Acquisition. This acquisition includes a total of 0.5-acre parcels: APN 6201-028-014, 6201-028-016, and 6201-028-018, for the creation of a new pocket park located in the Walnut Park community. The grant is in the amount of \$1,265,000.

**WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY ACTIVITIES**

**Duck Farm Project:** Construction contract has been executed with Fast Track Construction Corporation and a notice to proceed has been issued. A construction kick-off meeting will be held at the Duck Farm site on Monday, March 18, 1 – 3pm. Construction will last for up to seven (7) months. A ground-breaking event save the date is tentatively planned to be held prior to this board meeting pending availability of Supervisor Solis’s availability to attend.

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, staff opened the future entry park portion of the park to the public for a community event to announce and answer questions related to the park and the pending construction activities. The event was announced through bi-lingual flyers hand-delivered to each house in the immediate surrounding neighborhood, a bi-lingual banner located on the construction fencing at San Fidel and our website, Facebook page and direct notification emails to collected at past events. The event was very well attended and received by the public who expressed their overall excitement to know the park was going to start construction and would be open for them to enjoy this year.





Children of all ages creating clay animal sculptures facilitated by artist/instructor Nohad Sabbagh of Sculpture by Nohad.



*The Phase 1A Duck Farm project involves the development of a 30+ acre river adjacent park project that includes a neighborhood park entry, public access trails, riparian landscape, a native plant demonstration garden, native and low water meadows, a river overlook and interpretation features.*

**Duck Farm House Landscape and Water Project:** Staff is preparing an RFP to forward the implementation of the project. In February, Atlas Green Works, working with WCA staff, applied to Prop 68 funds from the California Natural Resources Agency—Cultural, Community, and Natural Resources Grant program—to fund the renovation of the farmhouse. Additionally, staff will draft grant application(s) for other Prop 68 grant programs in Spring/Summer 2019, as call for projects come available, to complete the funding need for the project which includes exterior building renovations and an indoor resource visitor center.



In March, as part of a community event to kick off Duck Farm River Park construction, staff solicited feedback from local community members about the kinds of activities they would like to do at the renovated Farmhouse. 30 community members participated in the activity by voting on potential activities as well as writing their own suggestions.





*Duck Farm House Landscape and Water Project will include the construction of practical landscape-oriented water capture and conservation strategies that average homeowners can achieve in their own landscapes. The Farmhouse will be renovated and transformed into a community resource / visitor center to compliment these conservation gardens and provide additional programming opportunities.*

**San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network:** WCA submitted an initial Task Order in late January, which was subsequently updated and submitted in February to span March – June 2019. The draft Task Order proposal includes various tasks associated with the development of a community outreach framework. WCA will continue to work with LACFCD to refine the Task Order, as needed.

**Emerald Necklace:** On March 28, 2019, Supervisor Hilda Solis’s office hosted an Emerald Necklace meeting to discuss the forwarding of priority projects. The meeting was attended by staff from the Supervisor’s office, various Los Angeles County agencies, and non-profit partners. WCA staff updated attendees on the Duck Farm project, as well as notified them of upcoming potential opportunities for grant funding. The team meeting was the first of what will be an ongoing discussion on forwarding Emerald Necklace priority projects, the meetings will happen bi-monthly.

# EMERALD NECKLACE

## FEASIBILITY STUDY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - PHASE I

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

### Westside Multi-Use Trail:

#### A Trail for All User Groups

The partnership of the state and local governments along the Emerald Necklace has a long history of collaboration. This partnership is a key component of the Emerald Necklace project and will continue to be a key component of the Emerald Necklace project.

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

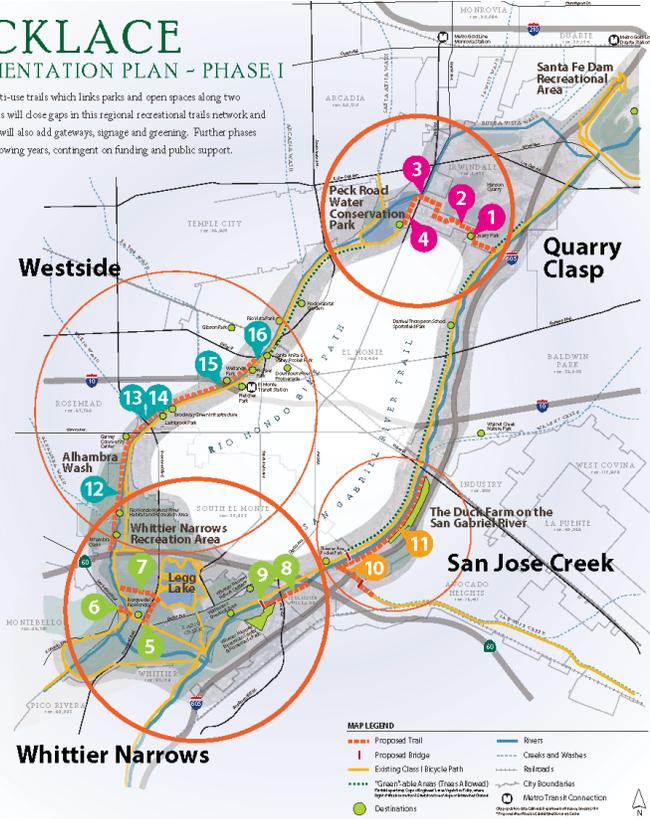
### Whittier Narrows Connectivity:

#### Linking Existing Park Resources

This section will connect the existing and proposed trails along the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel River. The trail will provide a safe and scenic route for users. The trail will also provide a safe and scenic route for users. The trail will also provide a safe and scenic route for users.

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

### PROJECT COMPONENTS



### Quarry Clasp:

#### Completing the Loop

Multi-Use Trail: The Duck Farm on the San Gabriel River will connect the trail from the Quarry Clasp to the Peck Road Water Conservation Park.

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

### San Jose Creek Regional Access:

#### Connecting Communities East of the San Gabriel River

This project will provide a safe and scenic route for users. The trail will also provide a safe and scenic route for users. The trail will also provide a safe and scenic route for users.

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



The Emerald Necklace is a 17-mile interconnected network of existing and envisioned bikeways, multi-use trails, parks, and greenways along the Rio Hondo and the San Gabriel River. Along the Rio Hondo the Emerald Necklace stretches from Peck Road Water Conservation Park in the north to the Whittier Narrows Recreation Areas in the south. Along the San Gabriel River, it stretches from Hanson Quarry in the north to Whittier Narrows Recreational Area in the south.

The Emerald Necklace Implementation Plan – Phase 1 (Proposed Project) includes 15 related projects that would close gaps in a regional recreational trails network and increase access to the trails to hundreds of thousands of people in the project area.

**San Gabriel Mountain Foothills Acquisition Opportunities:** WCA staff is currently applying some elements of the in-progress plan to pursue acquisitions in the foothills. Limited staff capacity at project partner Trust for Public Land has delayed finalization of the draft report, although TPL has continued to advise on acquisition prioritization and processes. WCA plans to meet with TPL in the next month to schedule and advance next steps and will report updates in the next Liaison and Activities Report.

The RMC grant funding the Master Plan also supports acquisition activities including negotiation, legal counsel, due diligence review, and procurement of reports including appraisals and title review. WCA, in consultation with TPL has planned to acquire recreation and habitat open space from the Glendora Community Conservancy totaling over 600 acres in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains above Glendora. At the January 2019 WCA Board Meeting, the Board accepted staff's recommendation to accept donation of the 128-acre Easley Canyon property. The Board considers the acquisition of the 143-acre Colby Trail property in March.

*San Gabriel Mountains Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan Project, will develop a comprehensive prioritized acquisition strategy and a recommended resource management and operations strategy to preserve critical habitat and open space, improve watershed health and increase public access for compatible uses such as multi-use trails and related passive recreational amenities along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.*

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

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

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

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

**Vasquez Acquisition:** In 2016, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) acquired the "Vasquez" property [AIN 8684-024-907], approximately 40 acres of undeveloped land in the San Gabriel Mountain Foothills above the City of Azusa, for the purpose of watershed restoration, community-driven stewardship, and potential for low-impact recreation.

Remaining acquisition funds will support the formulation of a land management plan that protects existing natural and scenic resources, preserves landscape connections to adjacent conservation lands such as River Wilderness Park, and restore coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and walnut woodland burned in the 2014 Colby Fire.

A request for proposals for a Spring Biological Survey and Report was issued on February 15, 2019. This survey and report will document biological resources on site, assess their quality and significance, recommend approaches for restoration and management of such resources, and evaluate the feasibility of uses such as

public access and/or mitigation banking. The RFP was emailed to about 200 biological consultants. The RFP was also posted on the WCA “Notices” webpage, the online RFP board of the California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL), and online “Botany and Wildlife Job Announcements” forum of the California Native Plant Society, where it received about 200 views.

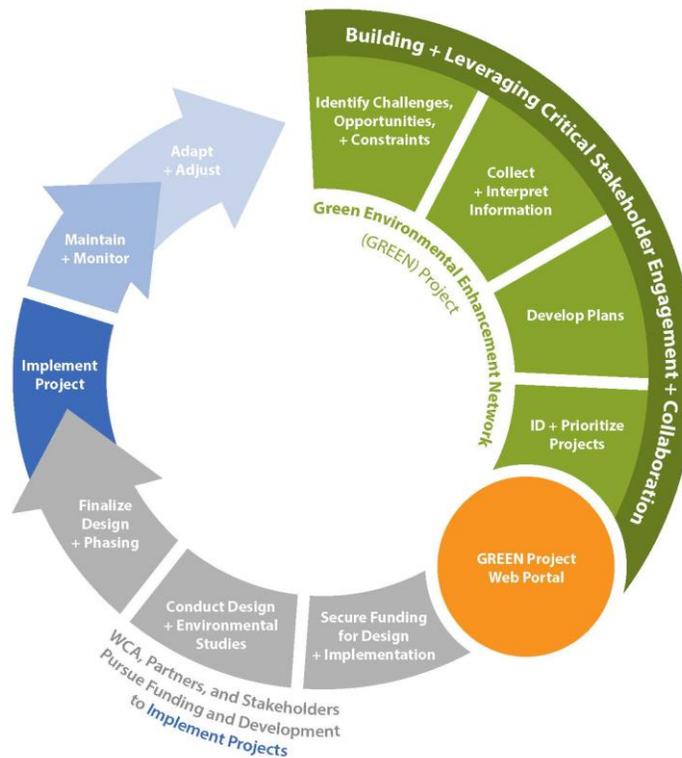
14 proposals were received, of which 11 were complete and received on time. Each complete proposal was evaluated for general quality of the overall proposal, scope of services, and qualifications and experience of the proposing entity.

**Lower Los Angeles River – Implementation Advisory Group:** WCA staff prepared and provided an update on Parque Dos Rios to The Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) at their quarterly meeting held on February 20, 2019 at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works headquarters in the City of Alhambra. WCA, will continue to participate as a member of the Public Realm, Water, Environment, and Infrastructure Subcommittee with the next meeting scheduled for April 9th where the group will hear project presentations from proponents and will provide feedback. As well as, review and have as reference 1-page summaries of the RMC projects that have been presented to other committees.

*The IAG provides a public venue for discussion of proposed projects/programs related to the Lower LA River; ensure proposed projects/programs are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan; and maximize multi-use opportunities and community benefits by encouraging collaboration among the many project proponents and organizations in the project area. In its role as an advisory body, the IAG will provide guidance on issues presented before them, but ultimately, individual entities with jurisdiction along the river corridor including the LA County Flood Control District, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the cities will continue to have decision-making authority. The IAG members and sub-committees will work together to further define the roles and guidelines of the IAG in the upcoming months. The IAG includes sub-committees for: Programs/ Policies & Community Engagement; Public Realm, Environment, Water, Infrastructure; Public Advisory; and Future Committee TBD (as-needed).*

**GREEN Project:** WCA staff has been developing the functionality and structure of the GREEN project portal in conjunction with the content of the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan. The GREEN project is a multipart effort by the agency to promote urban greening in the WCA / RMC territory. The GREEN portal website will be a tool that documents, complements, and amplifies these efforts. Most recently the Authority has been working towards consistent visual design elements on the site as part of a closeout of a web design consultant’s work. Future additional web mapping consultants have been considered for the next iteration of the portal.

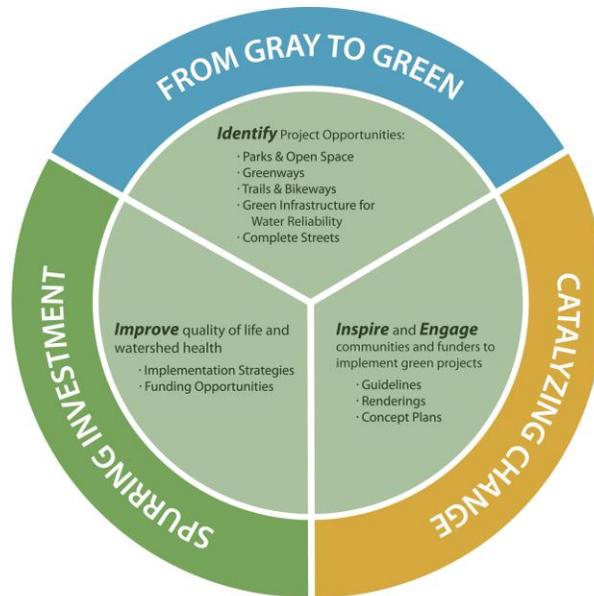
WCA is currently bringing new staff up to speed with the project and will propose an updated workplan to grantor RMC.



*The Green Regional Environmental Enhancement Network (GREEN) Project is a planning and project implementation initiative supporting watershed-based greening efforts to help support collaboration in the wider Los Angeles and Orange County area. The scope of the project includes regional data collection and assessments, identification of priority projects, and community engagement strategies culminating in the launch of an online GREEN project portal to share data and information, and to catalyze investments and positive change.*

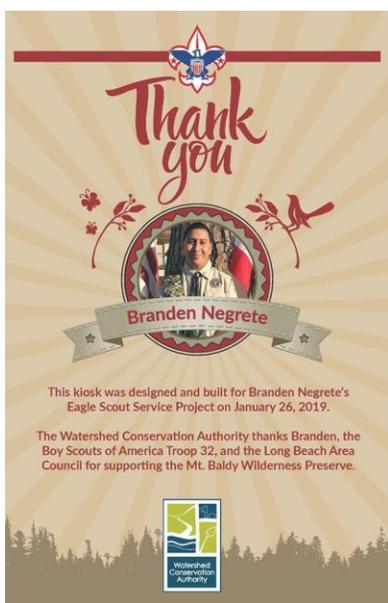
**Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan:** Conceptual design and imagery for the Greenscape tool is underway with all 12 greenscapes in production. Staff are currently drafting and uploading written and visual content to the Gateway Greening website. Staff is currently incorporation consultant data analysis into city-specific profile and region-wide recommendations. The design and development of the web portal is also ongoing in coordination with consultants who are expected to complete work in March. The WCA and RMC recently coordinated to bring an additional \$130,000 to the Gateway Greening Project to support staff labor and outside contracts and contributions. The project is expected to be complete by the end of 2019.

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held April 16<sup>th</sup> 2019.



*With a grant from the Strategic Growth Council and partner collaboration the WCA is developing a green infrastructure plan for the Gateway Cities Region. The WCA is advancing collaborative integration of regional efforts as staff continues to engage in compatible regional planning initiatives—including the AB530 Lower LA River Working Group. Together with the RMC-funded GREEN Project the plan is organized as an interactive web platform positioned to facilitate coordination, planning efforts, and funding for greening projects across the Gateway Cities and beyond.*

**Mt. Baldy Wilderness Preserve:** The Boy Scout Branden Negrete, working to complete his Eagle Scout project, managed Troop 32 and volunteers in the install of a new kiosk and permanent setting of the Dedication sign on January 26, 2019 at the site. WCA staff thanks Brenden and all that came out to support his project. We wish him well and look forward to becoming a full-fledged Eagle Scout.





*Acquired in 2014, the Mt. Baldy Wilderness Preserve is a 237+/- acre property located on the eastern extent of the Authority's territory, directly south of Mt. Baldy Village. This open space being preserved is in its undeveloped state. The site is publicly accessible for passive recreational use.*

**Crystal Lake Redevelopment and San Gabriel Canyon Master Planning:** After completing the collection of existing resources and data, the Crystal Lake project team, including US Forest Services, WCA, BlueGreen, and other consultants held the first major stakeholder meetings in November 2018. These meetings at Angeles National Forest Headquarters and WCA presented existing conditions and engaged stakeholders to identify opportunity areas. With existing data collection complete and outreach ongoing, including user surveys, the team is also moving forward with analysis to better understand the lake water dynamics.

The partial shutdown of the US Government has impacted the Forest Service and Angeles National Forest severely as did damage to the highway accessing the project sites during the 2019 rainy season. WCA staff will re-engage Forest Service, consultants, and other project team members to complete the plan.

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

**River Wilderness Park:** Staff is working with the City of Azusa, Caltrans and Design team to restart and complete the design packages for the overlook and park entry improvement elements of the park. Preliminary feedback, is that Caltrans initial staff selections for ATP projects for Cycle 4 does not include the roundabout project. There is one more opportunity to be chosen through SCAG but the outlook is not promising at this stage for funding to be awarded for this work. To date, \$2,752,860 of the estimated cost of \$6,495,000 has been secured. Staff will prepare Prop 68 grant applications and will pursue other grant opportunities for which the project can be competitive.



*The RWP is an approx. 118-acre property envisioned to provide unique wilderness experiences in the lower San Gabriel River Canyon comprised of engaging landscapes, gathering spaces, thriving habitats, and a regional hub and welcome center for the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.*

**San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Project:** In March, Staff closed out a grant from the National Forest Foundation (NFF) that had been due to expire and had been funding the stairway to the East Fork at the Oaks Picnic Area. Following the final EIR, Staff determined the improvements at this location required additional amenities, including formalized parking, trail, restroom, picnic area, trash facilities, and an overlook shade structure. Staff will reapply for NFF and combine with Resource Legacy Fund (RLF) funds to complete the design portion of these improvements while seeking additional grants to fund construction.

Staff attended a tour with the new Supervisor of the Angeles National Forest to introduce him and other Angeles National Forest staff to the projects identified as priorities by the final EIR and to discuss the scope of these improvements.

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



**Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space:** Landscape designers BlueGreen have submitted 50% draft documents and a meeting is being coordinated between WCA, the City of San Dimas, and consultants to review the 95% draft. Meanwhile, the City of San Dimas began trail construction in February and is expected to finish in 4-6 weeks.

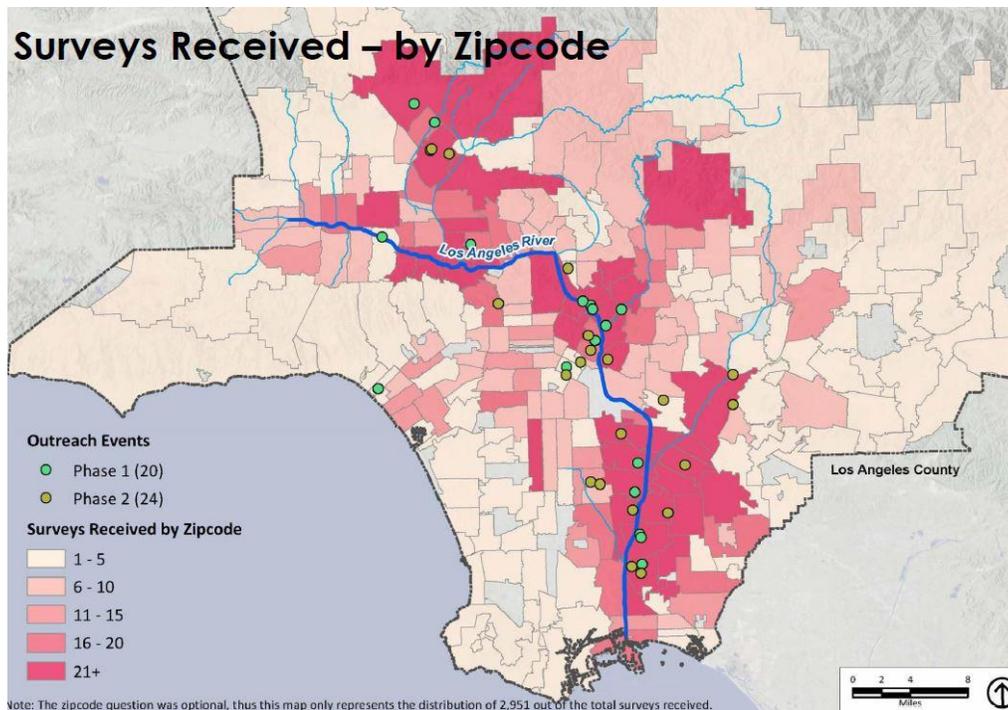
#### WALNUT CREEK – WEST PHASE ONLY



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

City of San Dimas the City secured County Proposition A funding in the amount of \$850,000 to begin initial West Phase development. The initial phase includes site clean-up, trail development and amenities (interpretive signage, benches, etc.) for a looped spur trail, habitat enhancements, and the planting of a vegetated buffer for neighbors and connect to the Antonovich Trail via County-operated trail staging areas.

**River Ranger Program Implementation Project:** The final River Ranger Stakeholder Meeting #6 was held on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The meeting provided stakeholders with the project overview and background, results of the outreach efforts, and the outcomes of the stakeholder interviews. Additionally, stakeholders were introduced to the key components of the River Ranger draft report and conducted a group activity soliciting stakeholder feedback for project rollout. The next steps to complete the plan include completing draft layout and design and final draft reviews by program staff and stakeholders. An Executive Summary was submitted to State Legislatures on March 29, 2019. The final report will be submitted to the State Legislature and posted on Conservancy websites by May, 2019.



*This map shows the total number of outreach surveys received per zip code for Phase I and II program outreach. 3,820 surveys were collected as a part of this outreach effort.*

### **OTHER PROJECTS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**San Gabriel Mountains National Monument:** Forest Service released the Final version of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Plan and Land Management Plan amendment on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018, initiating the 45-day Objection Period. A 45-day Objection resolution period (where changes would be incorporated into the final EIS) was extended through September 2018 due to delays caused by fire season and changing of FS staff.

According to Forest Service's Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA), a Record of Decision (ROD) is expected on the Monument Plan in April of 2019.