

Urban Waters Partnership
LOS ANGELES RIVER WATERSHED WORK PLAN
DECEMBER, 2011

PILOT LOCATION: Los Angeles River Watershed

POINT OF CONTACT: John Kemmerer, U.S. EPA

BACKGROUND: Includes the 51 mile Los Angeles River, with its headwaters in the Angeles National Forest to its discharge to the Pacific Ocean in Long Beach, and the over 870 square mile watershed. (See watershed map at end of work plan.)

Federal Agencies Participating

- Department of Agriculture – U.S. Forest Service
- Department of Commerce – National Weather Service
- Department of Defense – Army Corps of Engineers
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of Interior
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
 - National Park Service
 - U.S. Geological Survey
- Environmental Protection Agency

State Agencies Participating

- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
- San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
- State Coastal Conservancy

Local Government Agencies Participating

- City of Glendale
- City of Los Angeles
- City of Long Beach
- City of Signal Hill
- Gateway Cities Council of Governments
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Los Angeles County Flood Control District

Non-Governmental Organizations Participating

- Arroyo Seco Foundation
- Council for Watershed Health
- Friends of the LA River

- LA Conservation Corps
- LA River Expeditions
- LA River Revitalization Corp
- The River Project
- TreePeople
- Trust for Public Land
- Urban Rivers Institute
- Urban Semillas

OVERALL GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The Los Angeles River Watershed Partnership will work to protect, restore and revitalize the Los Angeles River Watershed. The Partnership will use the mission, vision and principles of the national Urban Waters Federal Partnership to guide this work:

- Promote clean urban waters
- Reconnect people to their waterways
- Water conservation
- Use urban water systems as a way to promote economic revitalization and prosperity
- Encourage community involvement through active partnerships
- Be open and honest, listening to communities
- Focus on measuring results and evaluation to fuel future success

In addition, the Partnership has also identified the following goals specific to the LA River Watershed:

- Restore ecosystem functions
- Balance revitalization with flood avoidance to ensure public safety
- Reduce reliance on imported water supply
- Foster sustainable stewardship

ONGOING PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

PROJECTS THAT WILL BE COMPLETED OR HAVE TANGIBLE ON-THE-GROUND RESULTS WITHIN NEXT TWO YEARS

- Hansen Dam Campground
- LA County Municipal Stormwater Permit
- North Atwater Bridge
- North Atwater Creek Restoration and Park Expansion
- Pacoima Wash Greenway
- Parque Dos Rios/South Gate Park Development
- River Forecast Site along the LA River
- Station Fire Restoration and Research
- South LA Wetlands Park
- Tujunga Wash Greenway

FEASIBILITY STUDIES

- Arroyo Seco Watershed Feasibility Study
- East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
- Headworks Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
- LA Basin Stormwater Conservation Study
- LA River Demonstration Project at the Bowtie Parcel
- LA River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
- Sepulveda Basin Concrete Removal and Biotechnical Bank Stabilization
- Sun Valley Watershed Feasibility Study

EDUCATION/OUTREACH/RESEARCH

- Indicators of Watershed Health Project
- LA River Corps

MULTI-FACETED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVITALIZATION

- Northeast LA Collaborative
- Taylor Yard Area

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS (listed alphabetically)

1. Arroyo Seco Watershed Ecosystem Feasibility Study

This Study covers the Arroyo Seco from Angeles National Forest boundary to 0.5 mile above the confluence with the LA River.

The Arroyo Seco is a major tributary and sub-watershed of the upper LA River watershed. The confluence of the Arroyo Seco with the LA River defines the boundary between the upper and lower LA River watersheds. The local sponsor of this Feasibility Study is the LA County Flood Control District. The study has identified nine specific areas for further study during the upcoming alternatives analysis phase. The sites for potential restoration were identified based on stakeholder and public input, along with consideration of potential restoration opportunities and planning constraints.

Involved Partners: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), LA County Flood Control District, City of Pasadena, City of La Canada-Flintridge, City of South Pasadena, City of Los Angeles, Raymond Basin Management Board, Arroyo Seco Foundation

Milestones: (pending the availability of funding)

- Alternatives Analysis Completion – October, 2013

2. East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

The East San Pedro Bay is located off the Long Beach coastline, borders the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, and meets the mouths of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers.

The USACE and City of Long Beach have embarked on a feasibility study to determine how best to restore the marine ecosystem in the East San Pedro Bay. USACE is the lead agency and the City of Long Beach is the local sponsor. Both agencies have agreed upon three planning objectives to guide the study: (1) Restore the ecosystem in the East San Pedro Bay; (2) Improve recreational water quality; and (3) Increase recreational water activities in the East San Pedro Bay. This study will survey and map the East San Pedro Bay ecosystem, include hydrology and hydraulics studies, socioeconomic studies, environmental studies, cultural resource studies and a series of community outreach events to meet feasibility study objectives. With the completion of the study, project managers will know whether or not a feasible construction plan can be developed; if one exists, the data gathered during this process will provide a solid platform from which to design the construction plan. Examples of benefits from this study, in addition to meeting established objectives, include in-depth knowledge of the East San Pedro Bay ecosystem that can be shared with partner agencies such as NOAA and Marine Fisheries, and economic benefits from increased visitors to a cleaner, more attractive beach.

Involved Partners: USACE, City of Long Beach, United States Navy, United States Coast Guard, Port of Long Beach, THUMS Oil Islands, City of Seal Beach, Surfrider Foundation, Peninsula Beach Preservation Group, Carnival Cruise Line

Milestones: (pending availability of funding)

- Public Scoping Meeting – December 2012
- Feasibility Scoping Meeting (Existing Conditions Analysis) - February 2014
- Alternative Formulation Briefing - July 2015
- Draft Feasibility Study Report – November 2015
- Final Feasibility Study Report – April 2016
- Project Completion/Approval – December 2016

3. Hansen Dam Campground

Located in Lakeview Terrace, CA, on Tujunga Wash, approximately one mile downstream of the confluence of Big Tujunga Wash and Little Tujunga Wash.

The project includes construction of a new campground, planting of native species for habitat improvement and aesthetic value, creating bioswales to direct stormwater into a wetlands area, rehabilitation of an existing parking lot, and construction of a new parking lot and safety features that meet resource use objectives.

Involved Partners: USACE, City of LA Recreation and Parks Department

Milestones:

- A-E Design Completion – March 15, 2012
- Construction Completion - May 25, 2012
- Project Completion - June, 2012

4. Headworks Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Located in the southeastern portion of the San Fernando Valley off Forest Lawn Drive at the Los Angeles River, adjacent to Griffith Park.

The Headworks Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study will evaluate ecosystem restoration through the development of riparian habitat and wetlands, creating a multi-objective project that also includes water quality improvement and passive recreation opportunities. Currently, four different alternatives are undergoing analysis, including habitat evaluation via the Combined Habitat Assessment Protocol methodology. Three of the four alternatives involve the redirection of water from the main LA River channel to the overbank (Headworks site) to help encourage ecosystem restoration in the region. One of the alternatives involves the capture and redirection of surface water runoff and overland flow to the Headworks site to encourage ecosystem restoration. Construction of the selected alternative is not anticipated until at least 2018, pending construction of a reservoir on the site.

Involved Partners: USACE, FOLAR, USFWS, CDFG, Forest Lawn Company, LA Equestrian Center, North East Trees

Milestones:

- Alternative Review Conference - June 2012
- Alternative Formulation Briefing - January 2013
- Draft Feasibility Study – July 2013
- Final Feasibility Study – March 2014

5. Indicators of Watershed Health Project

Understanding and communicating about watershed condition over the long-term is a critical aspect of water and watershed management. Assessment of progress in environmental management founded on investigation and reporting of watershed conditions is crucial because activities and programs impacting the watershed occur in numerous agencies and organizations.

The goal of this project is to describe ecosystem services and social/economic conditions for the LA River watershed using indicators and metrics to develop an annual report card of conditions. This report card will be communicated widely to agencies, corporations, elected officials, the public, and others to stimulate discussion and promote improvement in conditions. Assessment of watershed conditions can promote cooperation and integration of environmental management for the region's watersheds via greater public awareness of the condition of the region's watersheds.

The work would align with research being conducted to develop indicators for the Water Plan Update 2013 for California as well as Integrated Regional Water Management planning throughout the state. This work would follow on the Council for Watershed Health's pilot investigation of the health of the Arroyo Seco Watershed.

Involved Partners: Council for Watershed Health, U.S. EPA

Milestones: (pending the availability of funding)

- Establish LA River Watershed framework of goals, social and ecosystem attributes, indicators, and metrics: establish local technical advisory committee and task force consisting of community leaders
- Select Indicators for Analysis: identify available monitoring programs and data, select indicators and metrics for analysis; recruit indicator lead scientists/analysts
- Measure ecological and socio-economic conditions: use analytical tools to derive indicator scores from metrics.

- Reporting: Determine reporting mechanisms, write and publish report using a variety of media, including an interactive website and summary document
- Program sustainability: establish sustainable funding to enable regular, periodic reports.
- Estimated Project Completion Date – December, 2013

6. LA Basin Stormwater Conservation Study

LA River Watershed (in addition to Ballona Creek and San Gabriel River watersheds)

Develop options for meeting future water demands through increased capture of stormwater in the LA Basin, determine where imbalances in supply and demand exist or are projected, and identify issues where changes to the operation of water supply systems, modifications to existing facilities, development of new facilities, or non-structural changes could resolve water supply issues. This Basin Study will analyze the long-term potential of existing LA County Flood Control District (LACFCD) facilities and other local stakeholder flood control facilities to conserve stormwater, as well as analyze the potential for new facilities and changes in operations through detailed scientific, engineering, and economic analyses in order to meet the future water demands and climate change challenges. LACFCD will submit the Plan of Study to the Bureau of Reclamation in February 2012 for consideration by the Basin Study program. Potential funding of \$1 million Federal and \$1 million non-Federal.

Involved Partners: Bureau of Reclamation, LA County Flood Control District

Milestones:

- Task 1. Project Management – 9/14
- Task 2. Water Supply and Demand Projections – 1/13
- Task 3. Downscaled Climate Change and Hydrologic Modeling – 3/13
- Task 4. Existing Infrastructure Response – 8/13
- Task 5. Develop Infrastructure and Operations Concepts – 4/14
- Task 6. Trade Off Analysis and Recommendations – 6/14
- Task 7. Final Report – 9/14

7. LA County Municipal Stormwater Permit

The LA Regional Water Quality Control Board is renewing the 2001 LA County Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. EPA is providing contract and staff support for development of the renewed permit covering 86 municipalities. As municipal stormwater discharges are the primary causes of water quality impairments in the LA River Watershed, this new permit is critically important to meeting the Partnership's goal of promoting clean urban waters. The renewed permit will include Low Impact Development (aka Green Infrastructure) provisions and will incorporate Total Maximum Daily Load targets to restore water quality.

Involved Partners: The LA Regional Water Quality Control Board, U.S. EPA, Municipalities across the Watershed are providing input via workshops and other vehicles

Milestones:

- The revised permit is scheduled to be considered for adoption in May, 2012.

8. LA River Corps

Covering the LA River Watershed within the City of LA.

The LA River Corps is a program of the LA Conservation Corps, which employs local youth in the operations and maintenance (O&M) of River-related projects. The LA River Corps has played a prominent role in raising the profile of River revitalization by serving as the public face of the River and instilling lasting environmental stewardship values in Corps members. Corps members patrol the River daily, perform water quality testing and other environmental improvement practices, respond to public inquiries, visit schools to teach children about the River, and ensure that the River environment remains clean and safe for visitors. Corps members have benefited from their experience and received considerable public praise--particularly for their leadership role in the River's first pilot boating program. To date, the LA River Corps has been supported by local, short-term, geographically-restricted funds. The City of LA and other Partners would like to ensure the River Corps a permanent place in River revitalization. Given the Corps' potential partnerships with various federal agencies stressing the involvement of youth as stewards America's Great Outdoors (e.g., USDO's Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative, <http://www.youthgo.gov/about> and the Office of the First Lady's "Let's Move" program, <http://www.letsmove.gov>), a goal of the Partnership is to investigate how to make this possible. Moreover, a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will enable the urban youth of the LA River Corps to better understand the history of agriculture in our nation, the role it played in the growth of the American West, California, and the Los Angeles region in particular, and how their stewardship and conservation work relates to increasingly limited water supplies and other impacts to the local and global food systems (e.g., via water scarcity impacts and the importance of urban agriculture for access to nutritious food and water quality impacts on near-coastal and distant open water marine environments and related food systems). In turn, their expertise on these issues will benefit the residents they encounter every day, including schoolchildren, so that Angelenos will better understand the connections between urban waterway revitalization and community sustainability and quality-of-life.

Involved Partners: California Conservation Corps, LA Conservation Corps, City of LA, Urban Semillas, USDA, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Cooperative Extension Service; USDO Youth Go! Movement; First Lady's "Let's Move" Program

Milestones:

- Identify federal partnership opportunities to keep the LA River Corps working in the near-term and establish a more permanent support strategy for their continued work over the long-term.

9. LA River Demonstration Project at the Bowtie Parcel

The Bowtie Parcel, aka the G-1 parcel in Taylor Yard, is located on the 2700 block of Casitas Avenue, bounded by the LA River, the rail line, the Glendale Freeway and Division St.

The Demonstration Project will evaluate urban river restoration features and apply lessons learned during design and construction of the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. The Bowtie Parcel was selected for a demonstration project site because its current location, orientation, usage, and ownership provide an ideal opportunity to evaluate technical and engineering questions related to ecosystem restoration features proposed in the Study. This project was authorized via the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 in the amount of \$25 million (federal), and received \$100,000 appropriation of Construction General funds from the US Congress in FY-10. Remaining construction funds are pending appropriations. The features proposed to date include: stream-level wetlands, overbank wetlands, and river bank terraces.

Involved Partners: Corps of Engineers, City of LA Bureau of Engineering, California State Parks

Milestones:

- Concept Report Approval – April 2012
- Construction dependant on funding appropriation

10. LA River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

An approximately 10-mile reach of the LA River within the City of LA—from the Headworks site near Griffith Park to 1st Street in Downtown LA

The LA River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was started in 2006 with a 50 percent to 50 percent cost sharing partnership between the USACE and the City of LA. This Study has received appropriations from the US Congress since 2005 and can be completed with an additional appropriation of approximately \$1 million. The Study is investigating the feasibility of restoring a more natural riparian ecosystem along the LA River. This is viewed as a critical first step to enable restoration activities contemplated by the City of LA's LA River Revitalization Master Plan. The 10-mile Study area includes the Taylor Yard, River Glen, Arroyo Seco, Chinatown-Cornfields site, and Mission Rail Yard opportunity sites identified in the City's River Plan. *It is seen as the most important priority of the Urban Waters Partnership organizations and is a necessary precursor to many of the other LA River revitalization projects.* On October 14, 2011, the leaders of nine nonprofit organizations engaged in the Partnership wrote to the President's Office of Management and Budget and USACE headquarters to urge allocation of funds for completion of this Study.

Involved Partners: USACE, City of LA Bureau of Engineering, State Coastal Conservancy, MRCA, The River Project, Council for Watershed Health, Friends of the LA River, the LA River Revitalization Corporation, the LA Conservation Corps, the Trust for Public Land, TreePeople, the Arroyo Seco Foundation

Milestones:

- Alternative Review Conference – June, 2012
- Alternative Formulation Briefing – September, 2012
- Draft Feasibility Study – December, 2012

11. North Atwater Bridge

Crossing the LA River between North Atwater Park and Griffith Park.

The proposed North Atwater Multimodal Crossing will be a symbol of river redevelopment, providing connectivity and access on a multimodal basis from the North Atwater Park and neighborhoods to the east to Griffith Park and the LA River Bike Path on the west. The crossing will allow safe access for equestrian users from the stable complexes on the east to Griffith Park. Additionally, the bridge will allow for bicycle access from Atwater Park to the Los Angeles River segment of the LA bicycle trail system. The design concept proposed is a cable stayed bridge with a span of approximately 300 feet across the LA River.

Involved Partners: USACE, National Park Service, LA River Revitalization Corporation

Milestones:

- Design Development (30% construction documents) - January 2012
- Construction Documents – March 2012

- Project Completion - mid-2013

12. North Atwater Creek Restoration and Park Expansion

3900 W. Chevy Chase Drive, Los Angeles, CA

This project is adjacent to the Glendale Narrows portion of the LA River, in the North Atwater Neighborhood. The restoration efforts include removal of non-native and invasive vegetation, re-grading to restore the fluvial morphology, increased infiltration of stormwater, and installation of structures to prevent trash from entering the creek through the storm drains. The completed project will have educational signs, increased riparian habitat, and cleaner stormwater runoff from the neighborhood to the River. The City of LA funding for this project includes funding set aside as Supplemental Environmental Project funds originating from a Clean Water Act settlement agreement whose parties include U.S. EPA and the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Involved Partners: City of LA, U.S. EPA, LA Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Milestones:

- The project will be completed by January, 2012.

13. Northeast LA Collaborative

Glendale Narrows portion of the LA River

Pursuant to a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) \$2.25M grant to the City of Los Angeles, this project will create an implementation strategy for the redevelopment of 2,200 acres of the Glendale Narrows portion of the LA River, guided by the policy and vision of the City of LA's 2007 LA River Revitalization Master Plan. It will include consideration of land use, especially industrial and commercial zoning refinement, creation of integrated mobility hubs to support carpooling, bicycle use, and light rail ridership, a feasibility study on the creation of a regional food hub, and will convene a working group of business leaders and workforce development professionals to oversee a needs assessment and develop training curricula for workforce development. The project will focus on proactive outreach to communities who would not normally participate in the planning process.

Involved Partners: HUD, Community Redevelopment Agency of LA, City Departments of Planning and Transportation

Milestones:

- Redevelopment Plan Adoption – August, 2013
- Targeted Community Plan Update/Streets Standards Revision – October, 2013
- Begin pilot workforce Development training program - April, 2013
- Feasibility Analysis for Regional food hubs – November, 2013

14. Pacoima Wash Greenway

The Pacoima Wash Greenway will extend eight miles along the Pacoima Wash (a tributary of the Los Angeles River) from the rugged areas near the Pacoima Dam in the Angeles National Forest to the Pacoima Wash's confluence with the Tujunga Wash in urban San Fernando Valley. This new greenway will include a multi-use trail with native California landscaping, vacant lots transformed into new neighborhood and habitat parks, and the use of natural systems and BMPs to treat and detain local stormwater run-off. The project area includes

portions of the Angeles National Forest, unincorporated LA County, the City of LA communities of Sylmar and Pacoima, and the City of San Fernando. Pacoima Beautiful, a community based organization, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and many local government entities, have formed a unique community-led partnership to plan and develop the greenway.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has funded a study to explore site feasibility, synthesize previous planning documents related to the Pacoima Wash, and identify and prioritize opportunities to develop multiple-benefit projects. Community and stakeholder participation is a key element in the development of this planning effort.

The project received additional support through a grant from the LA County Public Health's "Policies for Livable, Active Communities and Environments (PLACE) Program" and is supported by the National Park Service RTCA program.

Involved Partners: MRCA, Pacoima Beautiful, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, National Park Service

Milestones:

- Opening of Pacoima-Eighth Street Park - summer 2012
- Pacoima Wash El Dorado Construction - October 2012 (contingent upon funding).
- Pacoima Wash Greenway Parcel Analysis, Development of Opportunities, Constraints, and Alternatives - September 2012.
 - Integration of stakeholder and community input - January 2013

15. Parque Dos Rios/South Gate Park Development

Located at the confluence of the LA River and Rio Hondo

In 2008, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA), a joint-powers entity of the LA County Flood Control District and the Rivers & Mountains Conservancy, acquired a 7.6+ acre property located in the City of South Gate. The property is located north of Imperial Highway, between the 710 Freeway and the LA River, with access to the LA River Bike path immediately adjacent to the site. This project includes habitat restoration and enhanced public access along the bike trail at a key connection along the Los Angeles River at its historic connection with the Rio Hondo. The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy provided a grant to the non-profit organization North East Trees to complete design and construction documents which will include bicycle and pedestrian trail amenities including signage, bike racks, a drinking fountain, shade structures, and observation decks with perimeter seating. Habitat restoration will include the re-introduction of California native plants and trees which will attract local urban wildlife. Project construction is being funded through a \$1.5 million LA County Proposition A grant to the City of South Gate which will be transferred to the WCA, who will be responsible for the long-term operation and maintenance of this property.

Involved Partners: National Park Service, City of South Gate, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, North East Trees, Los Angeles County Flood Control District, USACE, Watershed Conservation Authority, Caltrans, Office of County Supervisor Gloria Molina- 1st District, LA County Regional Park & Open Space District

Milestones:

- Commencement of Construction - May 2012
- Project Completion - December 2012-February 2013

16. River Forecast Site along the LA River

The National Weather Service (NWS) LA/Oxnard Weather Forecast Office and the NWS California-Nevada River Forecast Center in coordination with the City of LA, LA County Department of Public Works, and the Army Corps of Engineers LA District will evaluate the potential of establishing a river forecast point along the LA River. If an appropriate location is selected, the NWS offices will develop a river forecast model for the LA River and begin issuing river forecasts to warn recreational users of flood risks. River forecasts on the LA River would provide a benefit to residents, businesses, and recreational users in close proximity to the LA River and the established river forecast location.

Involved Partners: NWS, City of LA, LA County Flood Control District, Army Corps of Engineers

Milestones:

- Coordinate establishment of forecast point - June, 2012
- Develop river forecasting model - October, 2013.
- Begin issuing forecasts - October, 2013

17. Sepulveda Basin Concrete Removal and Biotechnical Bank Stabilization

Located in the San Fernando Valley upstream of the Sepulveda Dam, north and west of the intersections of the 405 and 101 freeways.

This urban river restoration project will meet multiple objectives. By removing the concrete banks of the LA River within the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin and implementing biotechnical bank stabilization using native vegetation, the project will restore native wildlife habitat, increase biodiversity, and make major improvements to the aesthetic values of a significant reach of the River within a major regional park. Moreover, it will decrease scour velocity, regulate sediment transport downstream, and reduce the risk of bank failure and resulting flood damage to adjacent public property.

The River Project intends to conduct an engineering and ecological site analysis, carry out the feasibility and design process with public and agency involvement, obtain the necessary permits, complete the construction implementation, and establish a school-based monitoring program in order to assess the success of the project and identify maintenance and adaptive management needs.

Involved Partners: USACE, The River Project, California Coastal Conservancy, City of LA Department of Recreation and Parks, Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee, LA Conservation Corps

Milestones: (pending the availability of funding)

- Planning and Permitting – June, 2013
- Analysis and Design – July, 2014
- Community Outreach, Construction – March, 2015
- Monitoring – May, 2016

18. Station Fire Restoration and Research

Angeles National Forest, Headwaters of the LA River Watershed

To address impacts from the August, 2009 Station Fire in the Angeles National Forest, tree planting programs have been initiated in over 5100 acres. Much of this planting is being funded by the South Coast Air Quality

Management District and the Walt Disney Company in partnership with the National Forest Foundation. TreePeople, a local non-profit organization, is leading volunteer tree planting operations for the Forest Service. The USGS, in cooperation with the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game, is studying the impact of the 2009 Station Fire on local aquatic ecosystems, debris flows, and mud slides. Other USGS research is aimed at providing information to help resource managers develop species-conservation and fire-management plans. The National Forest Foundation designated a Treasured Landscape within the Station Fire area which is the first such designation within the State of California. This designation is intended to raise awareness as well as funds to aid in the restoration of this watershed.

Involved Partners: U.S. Forest Service, National Forest Foundation, TreePeople, South Coast Air Quality Management District, USGS, Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, the Walt Disney Company, and Southern California Edison.

Milestones:

- Over the next four years, the Forest Service has plans to expand tree planting programs to over 8000 acres of the Angeles National Forest.

19. South LA Wetlands Park

5413 Avalon Blvd, Los Angeles, CA

The City of LA is using City funds (including Supplemental Environmental Project funds originating from a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Water Act settlement agreement) and EPA Brownfields grant funds in the cleanup and restoration of a nine-acre site historically used for railcar maintenance. Constructed wetlands will treat stormwater prior to discharge to the LA River. This Park will provide valuable recreational space for a densely populated urban area.

Involved Partners: City of LA, U.S. EPA, LA Regional Water Quality Control Board

Milestones:

- Construction of this park is scheduled for completion in June, 2012.

20. Sun Valley Watershed Feasibility Study

The Sun Valley Watershed is a 2,800-acre urban watershed located approximately 14 miles northwest of downtown LA. The watershed is tributary to the LA River. The Sun Valley community suffers from chronic flooding, water quality issues, lack of recreational opportunities, and air pollution resulting from the heavy industrial, commercial, landfill, gravel mining, and auto dismantling facilities. The USACE approved a 905(b) report, indicating Federal interest in the watershed and recommending that the Study proceed into the feasibility phase. The LA Flood Control District will serve as the lead local sponsor for the Study and will work with other stakeholders to provide the required local funding for its development. The total Study cost is approximately \$3.83 million. Fifty percent will be provided by local sources and fifty percent will come from the Federal government. The Study will open the door to funding for projects that provide Environmental Restoration, Flood Mitigation, Storm Water Recharge, Water Quality, Recreation, and Open Space/Habitat.

Involved Partners: LA County Flood Control District, USACE, Bureau of Reclamation, City of LA, City of LA Department of Recreation and Parks, City of LA Department of Water and Power, TreePeople, Council for Watershed Health, and Sun Valley Stakeholders

Milestones: (pending the availability of funding)

- Feasibility Scoping Meeting (Existing Conditions Analysis) - March 2012
- Alternative Formulation Briefing - June 2013
- Final Feasibility Report – June 2014
- Project Completion - May 2020

21. Taylor Yard Area

The City of LA's LA River Revitalization Master Plan prioritized the Taylor Yard area as a significant opportunity to expand river-adjacent habitat and publicly-accessible open space. The Taylor Yard area includes the existing Rio de Los Angeles State Park, future Bowtie Park (also owned by State Parks, see above, LA River Demonstration Project at the Bowtie Parcel), future affordable housing community, and the recently-opened Sonia Sotomayor Learning Academies with its LA River School. The area also includes a large, privately-owned rail parcel that, if acquired, would realize the vision of the City's River Plan as well as the 2002 vision of the California Coastal Conservancy by creating an important connection to the River in its already habitat-rich, soft-bottom Elysian Valley stretch. This parcel--the Taylor Yard G-2 parcel--is widely known as the "crown jewel" of LA River revitalization and is also located within the Partnership's priority LA River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study stretch. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has granted the LA River Revitalization Corporation a Project Planning and Design Proposition 84 grant to identify an acquisition strategy for the G-2 parcel. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is the lead for overseeing the remediation of the G-2 Parcel. U.S. EPA convened a meeting at DTSC's office on November 8, 2011 to review the G-2 Feasibility Study and discuss integration of remedial actions with possible re-use of this parcel.

Involved Partners: City of LA, USACE, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, U.S EPA, The River Project, Friends of LA River, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, LA River Revitalization Corporation

Milestones:

- LA River Revitalization Corporation Project Development, Feasibility Plan & Acquisition Plan for the G-2 Parcel - May, 2012
- LA River Revitalization Corporation Acquisition Negotiations - December 2012

22. Tujunga Wash Greenway

Located in Valley Glen, near Sherman Way

This project will establish a riparian corridor and create wildlife habitat along Tujunga Wash, a tributary to the LA River. The Tujunga Wash Ecosystem Restoration Project is a nine acre, 3000 foot long site that, when completed, will connect directly to two additional downstream projects owned and maintained by LA County Flood Control District, increasing the total length of the corridor to 13,200 feet.

Involved Partners: USACE, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, LA County Flood Control District

Milestones:

- Construction is scheduled for completion in October, 2012.

OTHER NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

To improve communication, an **LA River Watershed Urban Waters Google group** website has been established for posting of information about the partnership's activities and announcements of interest to the Partnership members, including grant announcements. To date seventy individuals from partner organizations have signed up for this website.

A **shared document database** has been established on the Google group site which enables partner organizations to summarize their missions, capabilities, and ongoing projects. One of the objectives of the database is to allow partner organizations to better understand what other organizations are doing in the watershed and reduce redundancy. The database also includes information about federal grant funding opportunities.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is developing a **web-based Mapping Applications Tool** of the Los Angeles River Watershed to further assist with communication among partner organizations. The Mapping Application Tool will help visualize pertinent project information and spatial data, orient participants, provide custom maps, facilitate planning discussions, and serve as an outreach portal to potential stakeholders.

In August 2011, the Army Corps of Engineers authorized the first pilot, non-motorized boating program on the river. The boating program, called **Paddle the LA River**, was implemented by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, LA Conservation Corps, the River Project, LA River Expeditions, Urban Semillas, and Friends of the LA River. During its two-month span, the program allowed more than one thousand people, including groups of urban school children, to kayak and canoe on an approximately 2-mile stretch of the river within the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area and Flood Control Basin—a 2,100-acre regional open space and recreation resource owned by the USACE. Members of the public paid to participate; those funds supported administration of the program and the free trips for the school children. Tickets were sold online and sold out within 10 minutes. The program was considered a huge success and through continued collaborative partnerships is expected to expand in the future.

The San Fernando Valley Superfund sites are four large areas of groundwater contamination within the watershed. In order to share information about this groundwater contamination on September 14, 2011, **EPA Superfund staff provided an overview of the cleanup status to interested partners**. Participants at this meeting included the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, who is working closely with EPA's Superfund program on groundwater remediation. EPA staff offered to provide detailed information on the extent of groundwater contamination should it be relevant to those planning LA River revitalization projects.

On October 12, 2011, California **State legislators came to Los Angeles for a joint hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on Urban Waters and the Assembly Select Committee on Revitalization of the Los Angeles River and Pacoima Wash**. The title of the hearing was "Progress and Opportunity: The Future of the Los Angeles River and its San Fernando Valley Tributaries." Several representatives of Partner organizations presented information on the status of projects to revitalize the Los Angeles River watershed.

In November 2011, USDOJ released its "**America's Great Outdoors: Fifty-State Report**" which included the combined **LA River and San Gabriel Trail systems** as one of only two priorities in the State of California.

USACE, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, engage in maintenance and operations activities which improve water quality, promote native habitat, and enhance the public's recreation experience along the LA River. In particular, USACE maintains active trash pick-up within storm drains that empty into the LA River and removes trash and debris from flood control channels areas of the

river. USACE recently partnered with Heal the Bay to develop a trash rack system for further improving removable of trash within the watershed. USACE also completed the removal of a total of 15.8 acres of arundo (a non-native species) from the Glendale Narrows portion of the LA River in Fall 2010, and is currently engaged in a two year monitoring and spot treatment effort. Last, the Corps Graffiti Abatement project quickly removes graffiti from Corps-owned portions of LACDA, not only contributing to a more enjoyable experience along the river but discouraging future graffiti.

The **Los Angeles Department of Public Works, USACE and Bureau of Reclamation** have participated on the **Leadership Committee of the ongoing Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP)** stakeholder planning efforts for the LA River watershed. The IRWMP program was established by the California Department of Water Resources as “a collaborative effort to manage all aspects of water resources in a region.” This regional effort is a unique opportunity for federal agencies to integrate national efforts with local priorities.

The City of LA, USACE, County Flood Control District, and many local LA River advocates have recently collaborated with a senior curator from the **Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum** (one of 19 facilities under the Smithsonian) on an upcoming **exhibit on urban waterways, including the LA River**. Partner organizations provided photographs, videos, historical documents and other items of potential interest for the curator to consider.

OTHER PROJECTS OF INTEREST

- Chittick Field Water Quality Improvements
- Cornfield-Arroyo Neighborhood Trail Network
- Compton Creek Soft-Bottom Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study
- Compton Creek Watershed Stormdrain Daylighting
- Dorris Place Elementary School
- Evaluation of Climate Change Impacts on LA River Watershed
- Evaluation of Heat Sink/Heat Island Impacts due to concrete channelization
- Glendale Narrows Riverwalk project
- High Speed Rail Project – Improve coordination of planning within the LA Watershed
- I-710 Corridor Project EIS/EIR
- Integrated Basin Management
- Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
- LA River/Aliso Creek Confluence Project
- LA River School – Urban Heat Island Mitigation Project
- LA River Warrior Gardens Project
- LA Urban Center for Excellence on Urban Greening (proposed)
- Let’s Go Outside Initiative
- Mapping for a Long-term Floodplain Buy-back Program
- Piggyback Yard
- Public Access to the River – Collaborate to Facilitate Decision-making
- Richland Farms Equestrian Multi-Use Trail
- Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study
- Van Nuys Airport Green Infrastructure Retrofit Project
- Watts Watershed Trails

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE PARTNERSHIP

Much of the partnership's focus has been on areas within the City of Los Angeles, a function of the blueprint provided in the City of LA's LA River Revitalization Master Plan. The partners would also like to include a greater focus on the Lower portion of the Los Angeles River watershed. It's been suggested that **development of a Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan** would be beneficial. Modeled after the City of Los Angeles' Revitalization Master Plan, such a plan for the Gateway Cities of the lower Los Angeles River could build off the existing 1996 Los Angeles River Master Plan by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and recommend ecosystem restoration, economic development and recreation enhancement. This would involve leadership from LA County and other regional organizations in regularly convening the cities along that stretch of the LA River. The Partnership helps set the stage for this kind of activity because it helps coalesce local leaders around issues of national importance which, in turn, helps encourage practical grassroots projects that are better coordinated and implemented more efficiently given limited resources.

Although many of the ongoing projects are located in disadvantaged or park-deficient communities, the partners would like to ensure that future projects do a better job of **directly benefitting disadvantaged communities**.

Active participation from the following federal agencies would be beneficial:

- U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration
- Corporation for National and Community Service
- U.S. Department of Transportation

Los Angeles River Watershed

