

SYMBIOSIS

A Newsletter of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

Summer 2011

Inside this issue...

- Yes, L.A. has a River!
- Confluence Plaza
- Pocket Parks
- River Kayaking
- The Living River
- River Cleanup

REVITALIZING THE LOS ANGELES RIVER



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome

Greetings from the MRCA p.2

L.A. River

Yes, L.A. Has a River! p.3

MRCA Opens New Park p.8

River Pocket Parks p.9

Partnerships and Programs

Kayak Trips on the River p.11

L.A. River Cleanup p.12

The Natural Side

The Living River p.10

*Front Cover: Soft-bottom portion
of the LA River*

GREETINGS FROM THE MRCA...

Dear Friends,

The saying “Out of sight, out of mind” certainly applies to our Los Angeles River, as you’ll read in this summer issue of Symbiosis.

Here’s a good question: Can a city truly forget about “its only significant river?!” If there was ever an example of such a case, it would be Los Angeles with the L.A. River. For decades, hidden underneath freeway overpasses, behind unsightly gates, and encased in cement, many residents and visitors never see, or unfortunately even know there is the L.A. River, an important natural feature of L.A. Initially the river played a major role in defining Los Angeles, from the city’s location to the layout of its streets, railroads, and houses.

As you know, cities built near rivers initially integrate its benefits into the city’s infrastructure and people depended on rivers as a source of water and transportation. In the early years of our city, the L.A. River performed in similar ways, but has since been stripped of much of its character and functionality.

Fortunately, attitudes and perspectives are beginning to change as many are recognizing the L.A. River as not just a storm drain, but that it can be transformed into something much more, such as a place for recreation, and for communities to gather. Working alongside cities, nonprofit organizations, and other groups, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority is creating parks, trails, and natural lands next to the L.A. River. Places like Marsh Park and Confluence Plaza aim to reconnect the people of Los Angeles to their river. And this is just the beginning as more river friendly projects are on the horizon. In fact, just recently a kayaking program has been created for the L.A. River with the MRCA Rangers playing a key role in its operation.

In this edition of Symbiosis, we focus on the past and future of the river, and how the MRCA is playing a major role in the revitalization. I hope you enjoy these stories about our projects and programs along the river, as we work hard to bring back life to this once forgotten river.

Sincerely,

George Lange, Chair
Mountains Recreation and
Conservation Authority



FEATURED AUTHOR: We are happy to announce that Jenny Price, published author, environmental writer, and advocate, will be writing the feature article in our Symbiosis newsletters. To learn more about Jenny, please visit her page on the LA Observed: www.laobserved.com/writers/jennyprice.php

YES, L.A. HAS A RIVER!

By Jenny Price

And everyone seems to be talking about it, and to know that something big is happening there. For decades, it was best known for the drag race in *Grease*, the cyborg-vs.-Schwarzenegger chase in *Terminator 2*, and a great many more Hollywood scenes of menace and mayhem. Still, if you asked people about it, they'd ask, "L.A. has a river?" It's been America's famous forgotten river. Today, however, the abundant ongoing projects to revitalize the concrete river all add up to one of the biggest and most ambitious efforts to create a greener, cleaner, and all-round more sustainable future for Los Angeles.

What Is Happening?

The story of the river's future has to begin with its past, and with this fact: the L.A. River is the reason that L.A. exists. It's one of the most reliable water sources in Southern California, and Native American communities lived on its banks for thousands of years. In 1781, the pobladores (the original 44 settlers) founded L.A. on the river, near the Arroyo Seco confluence. They described it as a gorgeous spot, with the best above-ground year-round water supply in the L.A. basin.

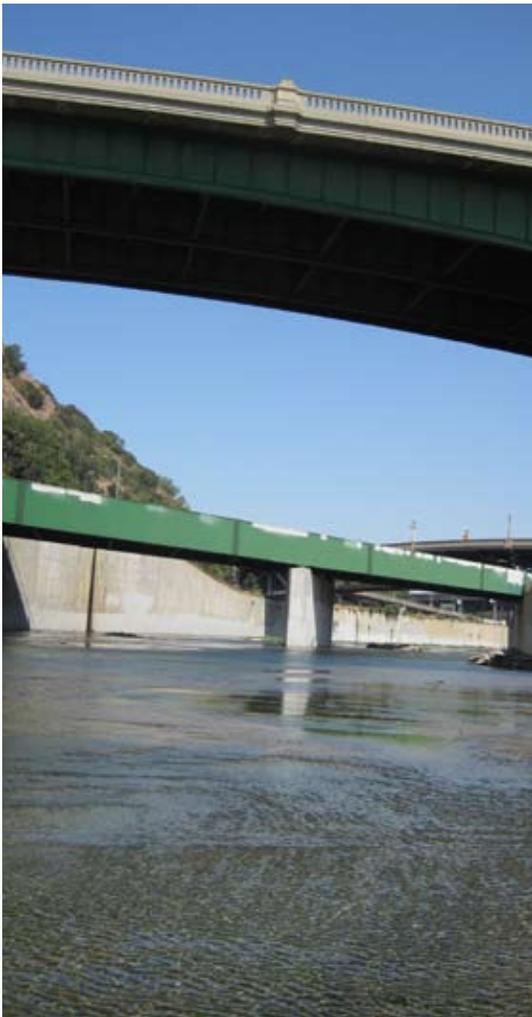
The L.A. area is a land of rivers and streams—one of the city's basic natural facts, which we too often forget. The L.A. River drains big chunks of the area's three major mountain ranges. It runs 51 miles through the heart of L.A. County, and is the central artery of L.A.'s major watershed. The growing town relied on the river (and the groundwater beneath) as its sole water source for over 130 years. In 1913, however, the city sent Owens Valley water flowing through the first aqueduct, and declared its preference for imported water.

The trees create natural habitat along the L.A. River, providing a resting spot for Cormorants.



It is too navigable...

In 2010, the EPA designated the river “traditional navigable waters”—which entitles it to all protections and requirements of the Clean Water Act—in response to a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ruling to the contrary in 2008. “The entire 51-mile watershed,” EPA chief Lisa Jackson declared, “... will have the full protection of our nation’s clean water law.”



Streets, freeways, and train tracks cross the concrete walls of the LA River.

Why Did L.A. Decide to Import Water?

The standard answer? “L.A. is a desert.” How many times have you heard that? However, L.A. boasts a semi-arid Mediterranean climate. We often have rainy winters — really, rain! — but we do live in a place where we have to use water carefully. By 1900, L.A. was pumping up three times more water per capita than many cities on the well-watered East Coast. And like a lot of cities, it used its major water source as a sewer and as a trash dump.

The alternate answer? Yes, we did outgrow our water supply — but only after we destroyed it. (And anyone who has seen Chinatown knows that more than a few civic leaders amassed vast fortunes off Owens Valley water.)

So We Messed Up the River by 1900 — but When Did the Concrete Happen?

The L.A. River poses one of the worst flood dangers of any river that flows through an American city. That might sound odd (Mark Twain once wrote that he’d fallen into a Southern California river and “come out all dusty”), but our river drops farther in altitude in 51 miles than his Mississippi does in 2000 miles from Wisconsin to the Gulf of Mexico. That’s a lot of water roaring very fast out of a lot of mountains.

In the late 1930s, after yet another series of floods sent people canoeing all over Los Angeles, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers charged in to solve L.A.’s problem once and for all. The Corps embarked on a heroic, gargantuan, and unprecedented project to encase the river in a three-sided concrete channel 20-30 feet deep. It took the Corps 25 years to pave the river as well as its tributaries. And then, the County Flood Control District proceeded to connect the street-sewer network to the channels to rush floodwaters as fast as possible into the channels and out to the sea.

The project obliterated L.A.’s lush, green riparian landscape—every leaf and every blade of grass.

Um... Mission Accomplished?

Well, sort of. The concrete channels have since contained our floodwaters successfully. That’s the kind-of good news. Unfortunately, directing as much rainwater as possible into the river (at least 50% of the stormwater in the watershed) turns out not to be the most sustainable way to control flooding. The unqualified bad news is that this gargantuan project has generated three huge problems.

One, water pollution: The storm sewers rush abundant toxins efficiently off our roads and lawns, into the channelized rivers and streams, and into the ocean. Bacteria, pesticides, fertilizers, car wax, copper brake bits — and trash, more trash, and a whole lot more trash. The concrete infrastructure has turned our waters into a toxic stew awash with plastic bags.

Two, loss of green space, and of park space, public space, and connecting space. All of which the L.A. area has always notoriously lacked. L.A. has long enjoyed less park space per capita than most American cities. You cannot have healthy neighborhoods, socially or ecologically, without parks and green space. Our low-income communities, with little private green space, suffer often unconscionable deficiencies. And it hasn't helped that in the 1940s and 50s, the city turned its verdant public 51-mile river corridor into an all-concrete Grand Sewer.

Three, waste of water, of phenomenal proportion: Our concrete infrastructure — gutters, driveways, sidewalks, streets and freeways — rushes L.A.'s rainfall very efficiently into the river and out of Los Angeles. Think about it like this: The City of L.A. uses the water we get from the sky for free to water the Pacific Ocean. And it spends \$1 billion and 20% of its energy use annually to import 200 billion gallons of water via 950 miles of aqueducts from eastern Sierra, western Sierra, and Colorado River watersheds. And that's just the City of L.A. And that's just... nuts.

In sum, if you think about it, entombing the L.A. River in concrete has either caused directly or is substantially implicated in three of the L.A. area's most difficult and notorious troubles: severe water and air pollution; severe deficiencies and inequities in parks and public space; and an insatiable desire for the West's water.

That's a Grim Scenario. What's the Good News?

If paving the L.A. River has caused these troubles, then we can tackle them substantially by bringing the river back to life. Just think of the three huge benefits of revitalizing the river:

First, *green space!* Imagine a 51-mile, park-studded Los Angeles River Greenway and Bikeway—the logical backbone for a county-wide network of greenways and bikeways. It'll green and connect a lot of L.A.'s neighborhoods and make them a lot more walkable and bikable. It'll bring abundant park space to countless communities, and especially to those that need it most.

Sounds Amazing! How Much is Actually Happening?

A lot! In 1985, the river was a no-green, no-trespassing zone. Since 1995, public agencies, nonprofits, and adjacent communities have built more than 25 public parks along the river. And the City of L.A. and L.A. County have built or renovated 25 miles of riverside bikeways.

Altogether, the funding going into revitalization projects now totals tens of millions annually. Which, of course, is zillions less (approximately) than we'll eventually need to do it all.

Still, nearly every relevant stakeholder, public and private, is working on L.A. River projects large and small: city, county, state, and federal agencies; a trainload of nonprofits; and almost every riverside community. In 1986, Friends of the Los Angeles River

Our favorite spots

- Marsh Park (MRCA site)—stormwater park with play area. 2960 Marsh St., Elysian Valley.
- Elysian Valley Gateway Park (MRCA site) - our first park along the river. 2914 Knox Avenue.
- Richard Lillard Outdoor Classroom (MRCA site)— has a walking park with interpretive displays and an outdoor amphitheater. Valleyheart Drive between Coldwater & Fulton.
- Tujunga Wash Greenway (MRCA site)—and the 1/2-mile Great Wall of Los Angeles mural just south of it. Coldwater Canyon Blvd. between Oxnard & Vanowen.
- Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve—almost Tom-Sawyer-like. Park on Woodley at corner of Burbank, enter on S side of Burbank just E of the bridge over the river.
- Valleyheart Greenway—designed by local 5th-graders—with snake wall, butterfly garden, great toad gate. Studio City, between Laurel Canyon & Radford.
- Yoga Park—mini-parks w/yoga course, and check out the footbridge at Sunnynook. Atwater Village, between Los Feliz & Sunnynook (entrances at Dover St. & Sunnynook).
- Dominguez Gap Wetland—egrets and herons and ducks, oh my! 4062 Del Mar Ave, Long Beach

Bike it!

- Glendale Narrows—8 miles, between Riverside (Griffith Park, off Zoo Dr.) & Figueroa
- Lower Los Angeles River—17 miles, between Vernon (@ Atlantic Blvd) & Long Beach harbor

Read/Act/Dream

- Joe Linton, *Down by the Los Angeles River*—the definitive guidebook
- Blake Gumprecht, *The Los Angeles River: Its Life, Death, and Possible Rebirth*—the definitive history
- Ulysses L. Zemanova, *Ulysses Guide to the Los Angeles River*—art, biology, and stories, some of which are true. Wacky and lovely.
- Jenny Price, *Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in L.A.*, Believer website—the Big Picture
- Patt Morrison, *Rio L.A.: Tales from the Los Angeles River*.
- folar.org—Friends of the Los Angeles River site, w/info on tours, clean-ups, & other events
- lariver.org—City of L.A. master plan site
- LA Creek Freak—terrific blog on L.A.-area water issues



Bike lane follows the path of the river.

formed to persuade the city to revitalize a river it no longer knew it had. In 1996, L.A. County published a master plan with general guidelines. In 2007, the City of L.A. published an ambitious master plan to revitalize its 32 miles, from the headwaters in Canoga Park to the City of Vernon. Long Beach has a master plan as well, and is implementing it enthusiastically. And major projects are happening on the Arroyo Seco, Tujunga Wash, Compton Creek, and most other tributaries.

OK, So Good on Green Space. And the Second Big Benefit?

Clean water! We can only clean up the rivers, streams, and ocean if we can clean up the toxins and trash in our urban stormwater stew, for which the L.A. River is the main conduit.

What's happening now? The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Santa Monica Baykeeper have joined forces to win two major legal decisions that require a massive clean-up. One, in 1999, with Heal the Bay, requires the EPA to ensure the establishment of Clean Water Act limits for many polluted waters in L.A. and Ventura County waters by 2013. The second, just this year, holds L.A. County liable for the heavily polluted runoff in the L.A. and San Gabriel Rivers.

Meanwhile, the 16 river-adjacent cities between Downtown L.A. and the Long Beach Harbor have been putting \$10 million in federal stimulus funds to work to install trash screens on all 12,000 storm drains that carry water into the L.A. River. And—all the projects (below) to capture water will clean up the urban runoff, since minerals in the soils naturally bind up toxins as water seeps into the aquifer.

Not Bad at All. And the Third Big Benefit?

Water supplies! The ones we get from the sky! Want to remove some concrete? We can't continue to direct most of our rainwater into the river. We need to capture as much of our rainfall as possible—not just near the river, but throughout the watershed.

To do that, we'll have to redesign the gutters and driveways to direct the rainwater into soft ground rather than sewers. We'll have to install porous pavement for sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots; green up our abundant asphalt playgrounds; and just generally green up the ground surface in L.A. wherever possible. We can direct the remaining floodwaters into basins that will double as parks and wetlands. In other words, we have to retrofit our infrastructure and green up L.A.

I wouldn't buy dynamite just yet for the concrete channel. Still, the projects to capture rainfall are proliferating all over the L.A. area, ranging from backyard rain barrels to large-scale plans and projects. Just last year, the City of L.A. passed a dramatic regulation that requires new development to capture the first 3/4 inch of runoff from a storm.

Along the river itself, the City of L.A. has built pilot “green street” projects in the Elysian Valley to divert rainwater into soft-ground swales instead of the storm sewers. The County and a slew of public and nonprofit partners just unveiled their initial green street, Elmer Avenue, in their ambitious Sun Valley project: it’s designed to model large-scale sustainable water management in an L.A. River sub-watershed in the northeast San Fernando Valley. In the Valley farther west, the 2007 Tujunga Wash Greenway diverts water out of the wash into a new parallel stream. And in Long Beach, the County’s Dominguez Gap Wetland project diverts stormwater out of the river and the storm sewers to sustain a magnificent, blooming, duck-packed 37-acre wetland.

What Good Stuff has MRCA Been Doing?

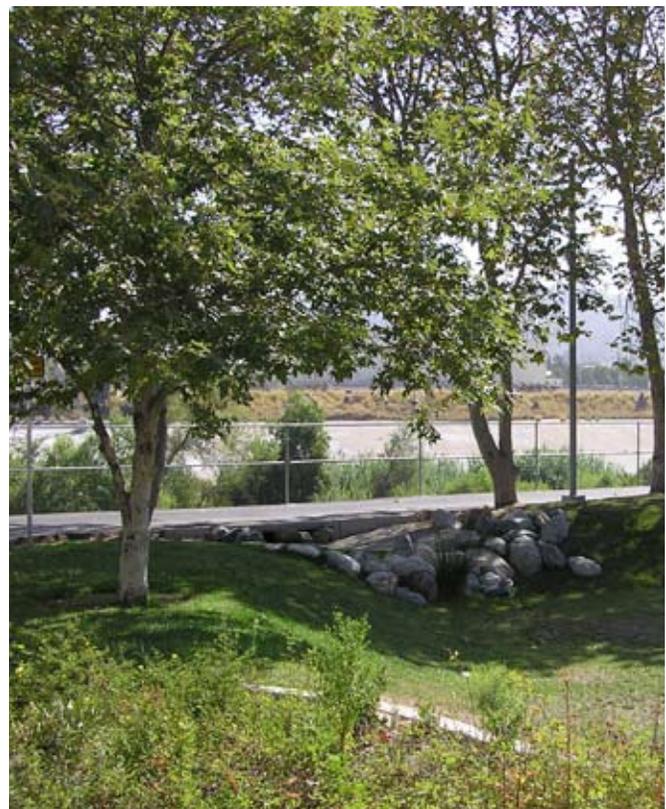
A lot! In 1995, we built the very first new official L.A. River park—Elysian Valley Gateway Park, on the Glendale Narrows stretch at the foot of Elysian Park—and we’ve been active on the river and its tributaries ever since. We’ve built outdoor classrooms on the Studio City stretch and on Compton Creek. At our new “stormwater park,” Marsh Park, we funnel rainfall off the street into a slightly sunken meadow to capture it and keep it out of the river.

We partnered up with the County to make the mile-long Tujunga Wash Greenway happen. We’re converting three streets along the Glendale Narrows stretch into green streets. We’ve also helped fund greening projects in the South, including Maywood Riverfront Park, which more than doubles the park space in the city of Maywood. And we’re building or contributing funds to a second phase on Elmer Avenue, a 5-acre park by an elementary school on Compton Creek, and many other projects.

We see the river’s revitalization as a key initiative in our mission to provide park space for all Angelenos, and to make our watersheds green and healthy both in our urban neighborhoods and up in the mountains. Maybe one day soon, Angelenos won’t just know something big is afoot on the L.A. River. We’ll say, “Yes, L.A. has a river. In fact, we have a 51-mile L.A River Greenway and Bikeway. We know where it is. And it’s gorgeous.”



Tujunga Wash Greenway is a 1-mile stretch that includes walking paths, native landscaping, interpretive displays, and a meandering stream.



Marsh Park features a grassy meadow that acts to capture and clean local rainfall.

MRCA OPENS NEW PARK NEAR THE L.A. RIVER

On March 30, 2011, Los Angeles River supporters, city officials, park advocates, and community members gathered in the early evening to dedicate the first phase of a new public park space near Downtown, and a striking new addition to the effort to revitalize the Los Angeles River. Los Angeles City Councilmember Ed P. Reyes, Friends of the Los Angeles River President Lewis MacAdams, and a brass ensemble from the Santa Cecilia Orchestra joined the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to flip a switch to turn on new state-of-the-art interactive fountains which will produce spectacular water shows every day on the hour at the new Confluence Plaza.

“The Confluence Plaza is a major milestone in our vision of a continuous greenway along the Los Angeles River with parks, pedestrian and bike paths,” said Councilmember Reyes, who spearheaded the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan. “This new plaza is a place where family and friends can enjoy picnics, water fountain shows and beautiful views of the hills. More importantly, it links the people to the L.A. River to rediscover our City’s history.”

Confluence Plaza is the first of several public park spaces that will be developed at the confluence of the Los Angeles River and the Arroyo Seco near the intersection of the Golden State (I-5) and Pasadena (110) Freeways. The new public gathering space and water feature not only creates a stunning new gateway to Cypress Park, and a place for neighborhood kids to cool off in the summer months, but also connects the community with the Los Angeles River.



Lewis MacAdams, Gary Lee Moore, Joe Edmiston, Councilmember Ed Reyes, George Lange, and Romel Pascual at the opening for Confluence Plaza. Photo by Gary Leonard

“This is the oldest part of what became the city of Los Angeles,” said Joseph T. Edmiston, Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. “The river confluence once provided one of the most reliable sources of drinking water for the new Pueblo. The city and eventually, its transportation corridors developed around it. We are here to link our city back to its river, and create a river greenway from the mountains to the sea.”

The plaza provides a lovely view of the verdant hills of Elysian Park—the City of Los Angeles’ oldest park (founded in 1886) and the southeastern tip of the Santa Monica Mountains. Significant to Los Angeles history, the plaza area is part of the Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail. The Trail marks the Anza expedition of 1776 which led to the founding of the pueblo that later became Los Angeles.

Confluence Plaza is just a short distance from the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, which the Conservancy acquired in the mid-

1990s, and the River Garden Park, built by the MRCA in 2000. The Plaza, which was once a brownfield site (and for that reason had to be developed with a mostly concrete cap) will now serve as a hub for bicycle connections to the River Center and the Elysian Valley section of the Los Angeles River Bike Path, which connects the MRCA’s mini parks along the river including Steelhead Park, Elysian Valley Gateway Park, and Marsh Park, and continues on to Griffith Park.

In addition to the fountains, the plaza includes benches and picnic spots for the enjoyment of the outdoor space and views. The future phases of Confluence Park include converting the public land on the corners across the street and adjacent to the river that currently house operations of the Los Angeles City Street Trees.

See the fountains for yourself! Check out the 8-minute show on the hour, every hour from 9am to 6pm.

Times subject to change.

L.A. RIVER POCKET PARKS

Discover the hidden gems along the L.A. River. These parks are part of the most promising effort underway in Los Angeles today - the transformation of the Los Angeles River into a continuous 51-mile recreational greenway. Working with these cities, community groups, public agencies, private corporations and nonprofit organizations, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority are creating a greenway composed of trails, parks, and natural lands. The greenway provides new recreational opportunities for the heavily urbanized communities surrounding the river as well as enhancing economic vitality.



Rattlesnake Park Intersection of the L.A. River & Fletcher Drive - Features the spectacular Great Heron Gates designed by sculptor Brett Goldenstone.
Photo by Kathleen Bullard



Steelhead Park End of Oros Street - With the backdrop of the river, this park features a small outdoor amphitheater and interpretive signage about the De Anza expedition .
Photos by Kathleen Bullard



Marsh Park 2960 Marsh Street - We offer great programs at Marsh Park, include our Summer Community Campfires.



Oso Park Corner of Oros Street and Riverside Drive - Features sculptors of wildlife that once roamed the river.

THE LIVING RIVER

By Robin Smith

Birds, trees and wildflowers - who would have thought you could find all of this along the Los Angeles River? Parts of the river have a soft bottom, lined with boulders and cobble, creating a lush habitat for wildlife. Unlike much of the river, these areas weren't paved because of a high ground water table, or they serve as flood control basins. Willow trees, native scrub, and islands of reeds and grasses are ideal nesting spots for birds, both native and migratory. Fish and crayfish swim these waters, enticing hawks, kestrels, and shorebirds.

The Los Angeles River is most river-like along its unpaved sections (totaling 13 miles), which are some of the best bird watching spots in L.A. County. Here are a few places to explore:

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve

6350 Woodley Ave., Van Nuys 91406

The Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve is a sanctuary for an astonishing number of birds. Located in the middle of the San Fernando Valley, this soft bottom habitat is one of the best bird watching places around. It features an 11-acre lake with wildlife viewing stations. Ringed by mountains, it is a haven for herons, egrets and ducks.

Marsh Park by the Glendale Narrows

2960 Marsh Street, Los Angeles 90039

Marsh Park, in the Elysian Valley neighborhood, is a three acre park next to the river with a small playground, picnic area and a stunning view of the Verdugo Hills. Follow the Los Angeles River Greenway Trail and Bike Path north to the adjacent Glendale Narrows (2.3 miles). Herons, egrets, stilts, and ducks roost along the water's edge. At sunset, the air smells like fresh water, wildflowers, and sage. A chorus of crickets, bullfrogs, and birds burst forth and the setting sun's reflection turns the river into gold.

Long Beach Estuary at Willow Street

De Forest Ave. & W. 25th Way, Long Beach 90806

Cormorants spread their wings to dry, turning and posing like bodybuilders at the Long Beach estuary, where the Los Angeles River meets the Pacific Ocean. Wildflowers bloom in the spring sea air. A murder of crows circle a Cooper's Hawk, protecting their nests. Shorebirds troll the waters for fish. The walk begins where the concrete ends, as the river outruns its concrete bottom for the three miles to the sea.

Imagine a natural free-flowing river throughout Los Angeles County. Planned revitalization projects aim to remove more pavement from the river floor to increase soft bottom areas. Thriving trees and plants freshening the air we breathe, fabulous birds in flight painting our urban skies; this would change the face of Los Angeles.



The lush vegetation of the Sepulveda Basin



Glendale Narrows during sunset



Beautiful riverbanks of Long Beach Estuary

KAYAK TRIPS ON THE L.A. RIVER

By Michelle Renner

Get a new perspective on the L.A. River from the seat of a kayak. Starting in August, Los Angeles Conservation Corps and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority will offer the *Paddle the Los Angeles River* pilot program for public and youth kayak trips along the L.A. River. Float among the willow and sycamore trees, spot egrets and herons, and ride past the concrete walls, as you learn about water safety and the history of the river.

These kayak journeys will travel along the Sepulveda Control Basin for 2 miles and take approximately 2 hours. The trips will include educational discussions about the river's past and future, instructions on river safety, and training on basic boating skills. Public tours will be offered on Saturday and Sunday, along with youth group trips on Friday.

The MRCA's dedication to improving the L.A. River and raise awareness about river safety goes beyond just this kayak program. Every year, in coordination with the Los Angeles City Fire Department, we provide special safety patrols along the river during days of high water levels. Also, a number of our parks are operated along the Los Angeles River, Tujunga Wash, Rio Honda River, San Gabriel River, and the Big Tujunga River, where interpretive and education programs are provided to the surrounding community.

We hope that while participants drift down the river they will not only have an enjoyable experience but will also gain awareness of the river's past, present and future. This is one step towards strengthening our connection to the local waterways.



*Councilmember Reyes, Lifeguard Rodriguez, and Mayor Villaraigosa test the waters as they kayak on the river.
Photo by Sarah Tamor*

Los Angeles River Center and Gardens *570 West Avenue 26, Los Angeles*

Near the confluence of the Los Angeles River and the Arroyo Seco lie the beautiful, mission-styled grounds of the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens. Here you will find the Los Angeles River Visitor Center that tells the story of the river – past, present, and future. Also with the



common goal of greening up the Los Angeles River, many organizations maintain offices at the River Center. These including Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, Friends of the Los Angeles River, Northeast Trees, and the LA Conservation Corps.

At the northern end of the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens is the River Garden Park. This public park not only serves as an entry point to the River Center, but also adds much needed green space to the local community. It includes running water fountain, park benches, a picnic table, and lawn area – a perfect spot to find some peace and quiet in the middle of Los Angeles.

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For more information visit:

www.lamountains.com

www.facebook.com/lamountains

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L.A. RIVER CLEANUP

By Michelle Renner

Shopping carts, plastic bags, car parts, and paper – sadly these are common objects in the L.A. River as it is often treated more like a dumping ground or sewer than a living river. Luckily, one yearly event is trying to change this in order to make our river cleaner and healthier. Equipped with gloves and trash bags, Angelinos volunteer their time to this noble effort during the Great L.A. River Cleanup. For the past 22 years, the Friends of the Los Angeles River sponsor this event, which attracts many individuals, volunteer groups,

and organizations. With 14 spots along the river, they try to make sure a large portion of the 50 miles is spruced up. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation is proud to be consistent participants in this great tradition.

On April 30th, 2011, members of the MRCA Fire Division joined Mayor Villagarosa, City Council members, and thousands of volunteers for this year's cleanup. The fire crew got their hands dirty and worked in the river, in addition to providing first aid services, traffic safety, and logistical support. In total,

the clean up resulted in approximately 25 tons of trash being collected from up and down the river. Back in May of 2010, our Junior Rangers, with the help from our Naturalists, volunteered their time to this event. The Junior Rangers found great joy in helping their community.



MRCA Junior Rangers help clean up the river near Marsh Park.



MRCA Firefighters and staff join Mayor Villaraigosa and Councilmember Reyes for the 2011 Cleanup.

This day is not only about creating a cleaner and healthier river, but also about building a sense of community around a common goal. And we look forward to next year when we can once again come together with the community and clean up our river.

For information about the Great L.A. River Cleanup, visit: www.folar.org.