



Figure 3-29. The river is soft bottomed in Reach 5.

### 3.6.5 Reach 5: Upper Coastal Plain

#### Location

This seven-mile reach begins at the outlet of the Whittier Narrows Dam and ends where the San Gabriel River crosses Firestone Boulevard in Norwalk, near the I-605 Freeway (San Gabriel Freeway).

#### Character

The San Gabriel River emerges from the Montebello and Puente-Chino Hills and enters a more gently sloping landscape. Confined by engineered levees and rip-rap, the river remains a soft-bottom channel but is narrower along this stretch than above Whittier Narrows. The river flows above the Central Basin, the most productive recharge area. Two of the largest and most productive spreading grounds in Los Angeles County lie just west of the river. Adjacent cities are densely developed with large areas of industrial use.

#### Key Issues

With the exception of the nearby spreading grounds, there are few large areas of open land available for parks and open space.

#### Projects Overview

Six of the 18 projects in this reach are new or improved parks. The remaining projects involve three new trails, and seven river gateways. Two of the largest new parks are possible because undeveloped land

surrounding the nearby spreading grounds is available. (See Map 3-6 for locations of Reach 5 projects.)

#### R5.01 Pico Rivera Golf Course

This proposed golf course would replace an old campground south of the Pico Rivera Sports Arena. An environmentally-friendly “green” golf course design will be needed to address water quality issues. The design suggests at least three holes in the riverbed.

#### R5.02 Pegasus Ranch Park

A river adjacent park was proposed for this site at a former equestrian facility. It has subsequently been determined to no longer be a viable project.

#### R5.03 Beverly Boulevard Gateway

This gateway provides a key entry point from the City of Pico Rivera to the river and the San Gabriel River Bike Trail.

#### R5.04 Amigo Park Improvements

LADPR would like to revitalize Amigo Park, adjacent to the east bank of the river. Providing access from the park to the river may provide more opportunities for the community to exercise safely. Planting native trees would improve the area’s appearance and contribute to wildlife habitat. Landscaping, directional signage and more amenities will also enhance safety, security and enjoyment of the park.

#### R5.05 Whittier Greenway Trail and Connection

The City of Whittier recently built a 5-mile bike trail along an abandoned railroad right-of-way, which added 38 acres of linear open space to the City. Another extension is needed to connect it to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail. Whittier is studying four possible routes, including one to Pio Pico State Historic Park. When fully completed, the bike trail will extend from the river to the City of Brea in Orange County. This trail is part of the MTA Regional Bike Plan.

#### R5.06 Pio Pico State Historic Park

Pio Pico was the last Governor of Mexican California. His historic Pio Pico Mansion was recently renovated and re-opened in September 2003. A new watershed enhancement project at this site will include a watershed interpretive exhibit and native, drought-tolerant landscaping. The project will open a pedestrian and bicycle access way under the existing rail line, between the park and the east side of the river. At present, the levy/rail line completely blocks the view of the river. A viewing platform may be



Figure 3-30. Visitors to Pio Pico State Historic Park are often not aware how close they are to the San Gabriel River.

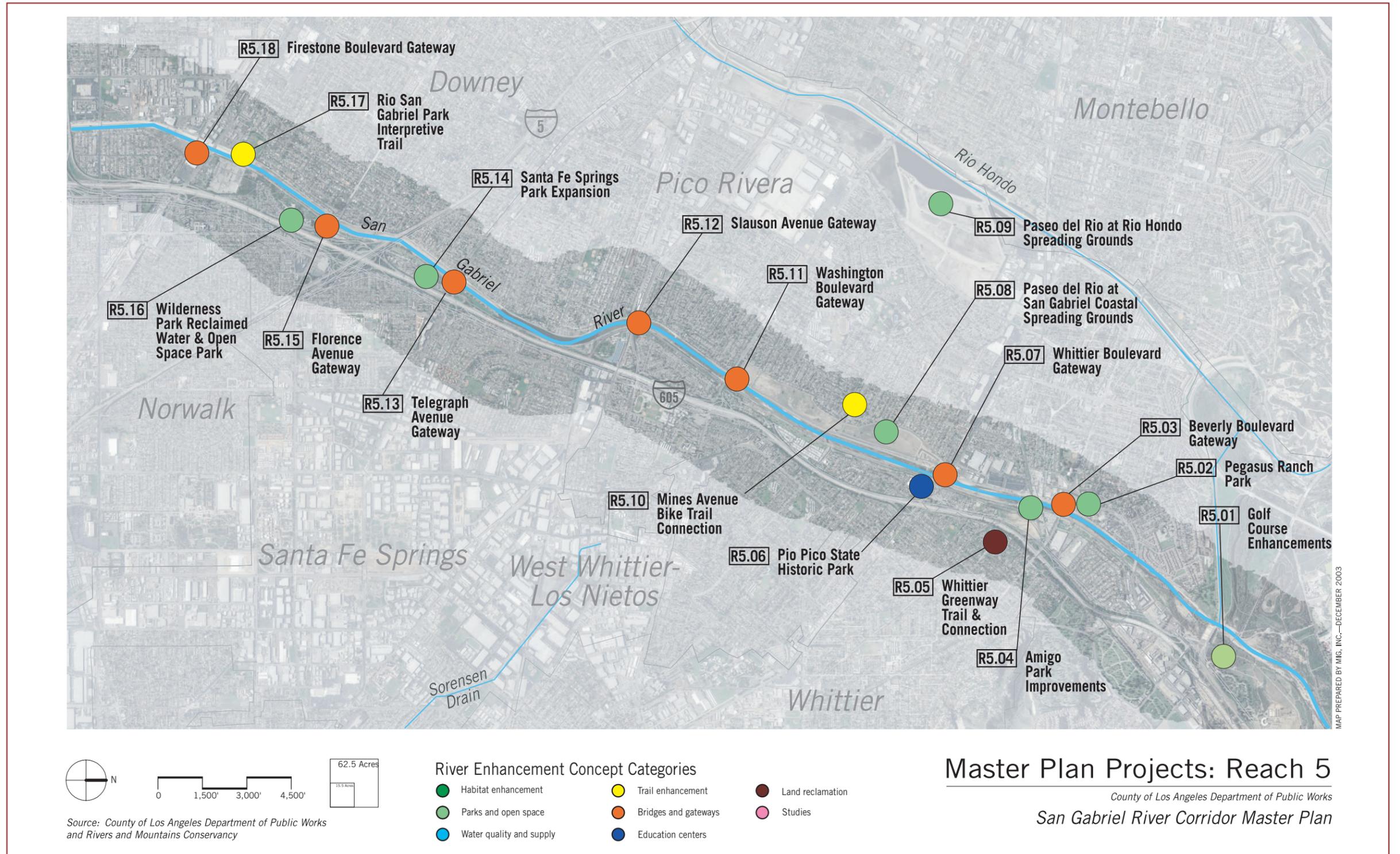


Figure 3-31. The newly renovated Pio Pico Adobe at the Historic Park is one of the many cultural and historic facilities in close proximity to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail.

constructed over the river, allowing people to take in the view without standing in the bike path.

#### R5.07 Whittier Boulevard Gateway

A new gateway for the Cities of Whittier and Pico Rivera at the San Gabriel River would be designed to help enhance the image of the western portions of the two cities. The current “Gateway District” for Whittier is 2



Map 3-6. Master Plan Projects: Reach 5.

miles east of the river. Possible partners include the California State Department of Parks and Recreation, LA County, and Caltrans.

**R5.08 Paseo del Rio at San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds**

This multi-objective 128-acre LADPW project will provide a bike trail, new native and drought-tolerant landscaping, shade structures and other park-like amenities to beautify open space surrounding the existing spreading grounds. The occasional presence of surface water creates the appearance of a lake to be enjoyed by nearby residents and other visitors. The project entails limited public access, with passive recreational and educational opportunities.

**R5.09 Paseo del Rio at Rio Hondo Spreading Grounds**

This multi-objective 570-acre LADPW project will provide a bike trail, new native and drought-tolerant landscaping, shade structures and other park-like amenities to beautify open space surrounding the existing spreading grounds. The occasional presence of surface water creates the appearance of a lake to be enjoyed by nearby residents and other visitors. The project entails limited public access, with passive recreational and educational opportunities.

**R5.10 Mines Avenue Bike Trail Connection**

This City of Pico Rivera bike trail will provide a two-mile connection from the Rio Hondo Spreading Grounds east to the San Gabriel Spreading



Figure 3-32. Picnic shelter at Rio Hondo Spreading Grounds provides a compatible recreational use.

Grounds and from there to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail. This will be a conversion from a Class 2 bike trail to a Class 1, separating the trail from automobile traffic for increased safety.

**R5.11 Washington Boulevard Gateway**

This project will provide a key entry point to the river and the San Gabriel River Bike Trail from the City of Pico Rivera.

**R5.12 Slauson Avenue Gateway**

The Slauson Avenue Gateway will serve as a key entry point to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail from the City of Pico Rivera.

**R5.13 Telegraph Road Gateway**

This gateway will improve access to the Santa Fe Springs Park Expansion project from the Cities of Pico Rivera and Santa Fe Springs (see project R5.14).

**R5.14 Santa Fe Springs Park Expansion**

The existing 14-acre park across Telegraph Road will be expanded, with the south side for active recreational users and the north for passive recreation and habitat. The expanded north half is a proposed 13-acre Nature Sanctuary. The project will connect the San Gabriel River Bike Trail with a pedestrian-oriented zone on Telegraph Avenue, and include gateway entry features, native vegetation and potential stormwater management practices.

**R5.15 Florence Avenue Gateway**

In conjunction with Wilderness Park, this project will connect the San Gabriel River Bike Trail and the City of Downey.

**R5.16 Wilderness Park Reclaimed Water and Open Space Park**

This 26-acre park in the City of Downey offers varied recreational activities for residents throughout Southeast LA County. The park has a large lake of reclaimed water, which is often used for fishing derbies. A reclaimed water project will connect the lake to the park's irrigation system, reducing the need for chemical treatment of lake water and providing a migrating rest area for birds. Another project will develop six acres of land for passive recreation, using native plants. The City of Downey holds a long-term lease from Southern California Edison (SCE), which currently owns the land.

**R5.17 Rio San Gabriel Park Interpretive Trail**

This existing 16-acre park adjacent to the river combines high- and low-impact recreational activities with one building for meetings and special



Figure 3-33. Parks along the river often include heavily used playgrounds such as this one at Santa Fe Springs Park.

indoor activities. The City of Downey plans to develop a native plant interpretative trail around the perimeter of the park, beginning at the river's edge. The project will include a trail made of decomposed granite, benches, trash receptacles, signage, restrooms and a picnic shelter.

**R5.18 Firestone Boulevard Gateway**

The Firestone Boulevard Gateway will provide a key entry point to the river and the San Gabriel River Bike Trail from the Cities of Downey and Norwalk.

**3.6.6 Reach 6: Lower Coastal Plain**

**Location**

This ten-mile reach begins at Firestone Boulevard in Downey and extends to the confluence of the San Gabriel River with Coyote Creek, near the Los Angeles County and Orange County border at Rossmoor, just above the San Diego/San Gabriel Freeway intersection. It is the longest urban reach.

**Character**

The river bottom in this heavily urbanized reach is concrete, the only stretch of the river where that is the case. An impermeable clay lens or aquaclude lies below the surface and prevents groundwater recharge from taking place here.



Figure 3-34. The river flows in a concrete channel for 10 miles in Reach 6.

#### Key Issues

While this heavily urbanized area has many parks, they are not sufficient to serve the large population. With the exception of the former NASA site in Downey, most available parks and open space land is along the river, making the river a critical recreational resource for these communities. Many of the large parks in the vicinity of the river, such as El Dorado Regional Park, were not originally oriented toward the river.

#### Projects Overview

Almost all 23 projects in this reach are focused on expanding recreational opportunities by providing new parks, enhancing or expanding existing ones, and by developing new bike trails or other connections to the river. Many of the proposed bike trails and gateways are designed to facilitate east-west connections across the north-south route of the river. (See Map 3-7 for locations of Reach 6 projects.)

#### R6.01 Downey Landing

The City of Downey plans to develop a new, combination low-impact/high impact recreation area with ballfields and a walking trail at what was once a parking lot for the former NASA site (home to the Apollo and Space Shuttle Orbiter programs). An interpretive trail along the perimeter of the 11.5-acre park will include natural vegetation and a biofiltration swale system to capture and clean 130 acres of urban stormwater runoff and provide flood protection. The project includes trailhead and trailside

facilities, restrooms, a shade structure for educational purposes, benches, trashcans, drinking fountains and bike racks. The trail will be enhanced with trees providing a canopy of shade, the creek-like swale system and natural vegetation. Interpretive signage will provide information on the process being used to clean the stormwater. Adjacent to the park site will be the 20,000 square foot Columbia Memorial Space Learning Center.

#### R6.02 Foster Road Gateway

The Foster Road Gateway will serve as a key entry point and pedestrian bridge to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail for the Cities of Downey, Bellflower and Norwalk.

#### R6.03 H. Byrun Zinn Park Improvements

The City of Bellflower plans open space enhancements including a pedestrian path, trees and benches to an existing four-acre park where Foster Road comes to a dead end at the river. Landscape improvements will maintain the current passive, low-impact recreational use. The project will be integrated with the Foster Road Gateway (R6.02). It is located in the Southern California Edison right-of-way.

#### R6.04 Rosecrans Avenue Gateway

This project will provide a key entry point to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail for the Cities of Bellflower and Norwalk.

#### R6.05 Excelsior Drive Gateway Park

Excelsior Drive Gateway Park will serve as a potential entry point from Norwalk to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail.

#### R6.06 Bellflower High Bike Trail Connection

This bike trail connection from Bellflower High School east to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail at the MTA right-of-way will improve local community access to the river trail.

#### R6.07 Riverview Park

Riverview Park will be a new 15-acre recreation area fronting the river. The project will provide a natural, riverfront environment serving the residents of Bellflower and many other communities up and down the river. Proposed improvements include a paved bikeway, landscaping, park benches and informational signage. A direct linkage to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail will be created, as well as linkage to the City of Bellflower West Branch Greenway. There will be an information kiosk for both the River Trail and the West Branch Bikeway (see R6.11). The State of California Resources Agency awarded the City of Bellflower a grant of

\$2.97 million for Riverview Park, which will be funded by Proposition 12 park bond funds. The funds will be used for land acquisition, trails, botanical gardens with native plants and passive recreation. In addition, the RMC recently awarded the City of Bellflower \$100,000 in Proposition 40 planning grants to fund planning activities for the property.

#### R6.08 Alondra Boulevard Gateway

The Alondra Boulevard Gateway will provide a key entry point to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail for the Cities of Bellflower and Norwalk.

#### R6.09 Cerritos College Bike Link

A bike trail connection from Cerritos College along Alondra Boulevard west to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail will greatly improve local community access.

#### R6.10 North Caruther's Channel Improvements

Improvements are needed to address the algae and mosquito problem caused by slow moving water at this tributary to the San Gabriel River. Solutions include creating a soft-bottom and naturalistic channel design to facilitate water flow.

#### R6.11 West Branch Greenway Rails-to-Trails Project

This new 2.5 mile rails-to-trails project on an abandoned Pacific Electric right-of-way will provide an west-east connection from Lakewood Boulevard to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail. The project will result in a Class I bikeway and pedestrian trail.



Figure 3-35. Slow moving water in Caruthers Channel encourages algae growth.

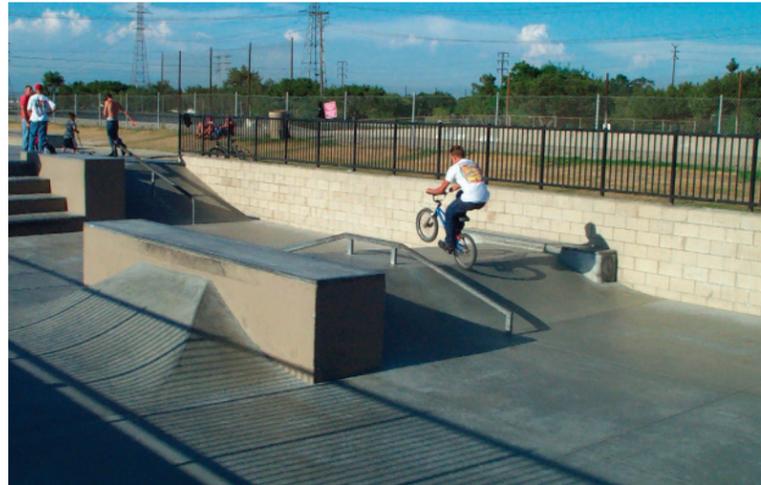


Figure 3-36. A well-designed skate-park is enjoyed by neighborhood youth.

#### **R6.12 West Branch Greenway Bike Connection Area**

This site is proposed for a BMX park. Acquisition of an open space area between the abandoned Pacific Electric railway and the river will be needed to create a full connection between the West Branch Greenway and the river.

#### **R6.13 Artesia Boulevard Gateway**

The Artesia Boulevard Gateway will provide a key entry point to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail for the Cities of Bellflower and Cerritos.

#### **R6.14 South Street Gateway**

This gateway could improve access to the San Gabriel River west side maintenance road and a future trail to West Gate Park. No plans have been started for this project. Design of such a project might depend on adopted recommended design guidelines that provide for some degree of consistency up and down the river.

#### **R6.15 Liberty Park Improvement Project**

Improvements will be made to this existing park to provide accessibility for park users with disabilities and passive natural areas with sensory amenities. The project will upgrade an existing playground to universal access standards and provide additional playground space. Additional accessible parking will be provided along with an artificial surface track and walking trail. Amenities will also be provided for bikers and joggers on the San Gabriel River Bike Trail.

#### **R6.16 Del Amo Boulevard Gateway**

The Del Amo Boulevard Gateway could provide a key entry point to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail for the Cities of Lakewood and Cerritos. No plans have been started for this project. Design of such a project might depend on adopted recommended design guidelines that provide for some degree of consistency up and down the river.

#### **R6.17 Mae Boyer Park Renovation**

The project includes river parkway enhancements and trail access to an existing 6.8-acre park adjacent to the river. Renovations include picnic shelter replacement and amenity upgrades such as parking lots, restrooms and landscaping. Construction of the first phase of this project is nearing completion. The City of Lakewood has applied for a grant for the next phase of the project.

#### **R6.18 West San Gabriel River Open Space Area**

This recently completed City of Lakewood project extends open space adjacent to the west side of the river from Carson Boulevard north to Monte Verde Park. This project provides improved bike path linkage on the west side of the river and the San Gabriel River Bike Trail on the east side, an automatic irrigation system, several species of California indigenous trees, meadow grasses and shrubs. Low growing plants are being used under the utility easements. This new park faces Rynerson Park on the east side of the river, creating landscaped parks on both sides of the river. The City of Lakewood has recently submitted a grant for Phase 2 of the project. This second phase will be an extension of the first phase from Monte Verde Park to Del Amo Boulevard.

#### **R6.19 Carson Avenue Gateway**

The Carson Avenue Gateway will provide a key entry point to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail for the Cities of Lakewood and Long Beach. Better signage is needed for the Lakewood Equestrian Center at Rynerson Park. The intersection may require a traffic signal or an undercrossing of the service road to provide a connection from the West San Gabriel River Open Space Area to the Heartwell Golf Course and Park, which lies farther west along Carson Street. No plans have been started for this project. Design of such a project might depend on adopted recommended design guidelines that provide for some degree of consistency up and down the river. Lakewood and Long Beach may need to coordinate with each other on this project.



Figure 3-37. School children enjoy the bridge crossing at the El Dorado Nature Center.

#### **R6.20 East-West Pedestrian Bridge Enhancement**

Enhancements to an existing bridge will provide a connection between the San Gabriel River Bike Trail on the east side of the river and the maintenance road used by bicyclists on the west side.

#### **R6.21 El Dorado Regional Park Wetlands (Concept Design Study, See Section 3.8.5)**

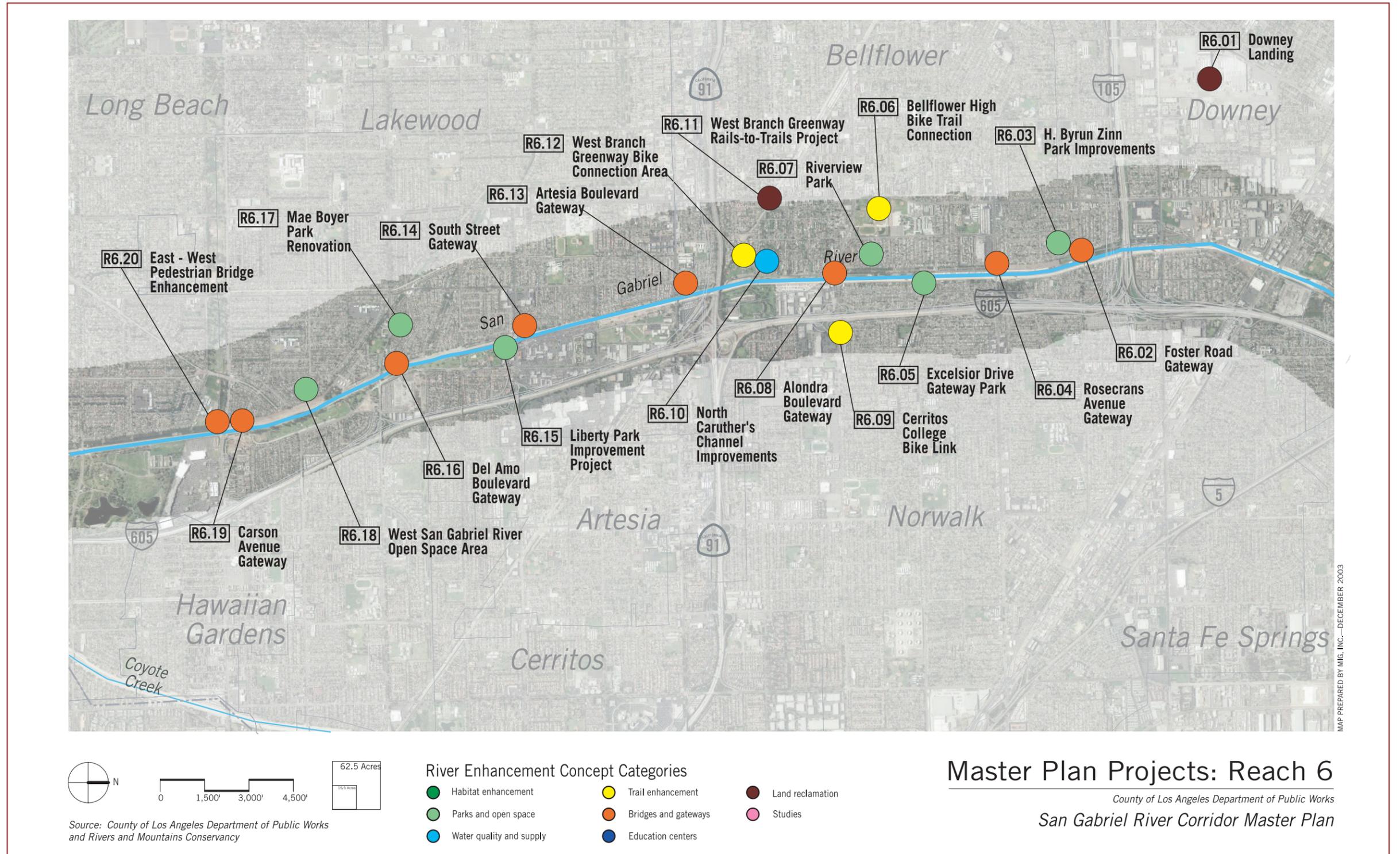
This park borders the river for about two miles, but flood control levees (berms) along the river sever the connection between activities in the park and the river. The City of Long Beach proposed this project to reconnect El Dorado Park with the river. It will create treatment wetlands in the northern section of El Dorado Park and treat San Gabriel River water, stormwater runoff, and/or reclaimed water to replace the potable water supply to the lakes and streams within the regional park.

#### **R6.22 El Dorado Nature Center Master Plan**

A recent Master Plan updates the existing Nature Center and surrounding landscape. Improvements will transition the landscape to more low-water and native plants. The ponds and aeration will be improved and the area south of Willow Street will be developed to expand park and open space. That area may also include treatment wetlands.

#### **R6.23 San Gabriel River Walk Phase 1 and 2**

The City of Long Beach proposed developing a 1.5-mile pedestrian and bicycle trail through a restored native landscape along the western bank of



Map 3-7. Master Plan Projects: Reach 6.

the river in the City of Los Angeles Department of Water & Power right-of-way. Phase 1 can be built now. The project will begin at Spring Street to the north at the El Dorado Park Golf Course, and run south to Atherton Drive just above the San Diego Freeway. Atherton Drive will provide regional access to California State University Long Beach and El Dorado Regional Park. A bridge will connect the regional trails on the east bank of the river and along Coyote Creek with the Long Beach trail system. Phase 2, another 1.5-mile stretch of new trail and open space, will begin at Spring Street and travel north along the right of way to Carson Avenue. This will connect the West San Gabriel River Open Space Area (see R6.18) in Lakewood above Carson Avenue.

### 3.6.7 Reach 7: Zone of Tidal Influence

#### Location

The final 3.5 miles of the river flows from Coyote Creek to the Pacific Ocean, flowing between Long Beach in Los Angeles County and Seal Beach in Orange County.

#### Character

In this last section of the river before it enters the Pacific Ocean, the channel again has a soft bottom. In this reach, salt water from ocean tides mixes with river water in a natural estuary. The Coyote Creek portion is channelized here. Historically, the area near the mouth of the river was dominated by wetlands. Today, large industrial and utility uses in the



Figure 3-38. Tidal action fills the river with salt water as it nears the Pacific Ocean.

northern half of the reach gradually give way to plant nurseries, homes and marinas at the southern end of the reach.

#### Key Issues

Large oilfields and other industrial fields present future land reclamation opportunities, especially possible wetlands restoration. Debris in the river at this point can be a significant problem, especially following storms that bring trash and other pollutants down from upstream areas.

#### Projects Overview

Many of the 17 projects along this reach are designed to reconnect people to the river and to the wetlands that previously characterized the area. Wetlands restoration projects will also offer habitat for birds and other native species. Other projects provide enhancements to the regional bike trail along the river or connections to it. A number of key projects will address water quality concerns. (See Map 3-8 for locations of Reach 7 projects.)

#### R7.01 Coyote and Carbon Creeks Watershed Management Plan

This is a two-phased project. The Phase I Management Plan, headed by the County of Orange, will identify and prioritize potential projects for implementation through stakeholder input and spatial analysis using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping. The Phase II Coyote Creek-Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Feasibility Study is in its early stages pending increased funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

#### R7.02 Coyote Creek Regional Bikeway Improvements

The County of Orange is currently partnering with a local non-profit organization, Trails4All, to request funding from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers & Mountains Conservancy to develop this bikeway improvements project. This project will involve a Working Group of all landowners along Coyote Creek, including several cities, the Counties of Los Angeles and Orange, and other key stakeholders to develop a regional bikeway signage program and to develop a long-term Trails Needs Assessment and Master Plan.

#### R7.03 Coyote Creek Debris Boom

The City of Seal Beach received a grant from the Coastal Conservancy to investigate upgrading a debris restraint system and physical net and boom, similar to that of a fishing net, to catch and hold debris. This project will

help reduce the flow of debris into the Pacific Ocean. Design has been completed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

#### R7.04 Los Alamitos Channel Treatment Wetland

Orange County proposes urban stormwater treatment wetlands to treat Coyote Creek flows, as part of the COE Coyote Creek Watershed Plan study.

#### R7.05 Proposed Confluence Bridge

A proposed bike and pedestrian bridge at the Coyote Creek Confluence will connect the San Gabriel River Bike Trail to the Coyote Creek Bike Trail.

#### R7.06 San Gabriel River Walk Phase 3

This project is a continuation of the San Gabriel River Walk (see R6.23). This stretch of trail will extend from Atherton Drive, along the west side of the river, potentially down to the Long Beach Marina. It will involve Seal Beach for a small segment where College Estates Park exists, just above the 22 Freeway.

#### R7.07 Los Cerritos Wetland Restoration (Bryant and Bixby)

This project proposes acquiring about 266 acres of land currently used for oil operations. The Bixby property is 181 acres and the Bryant property approximately 85 acres. The sites, located near the end of the river just north of Alamitos Bay, are surrounded by urban development but still provide valuable habitat for birds and a salt marsh field.

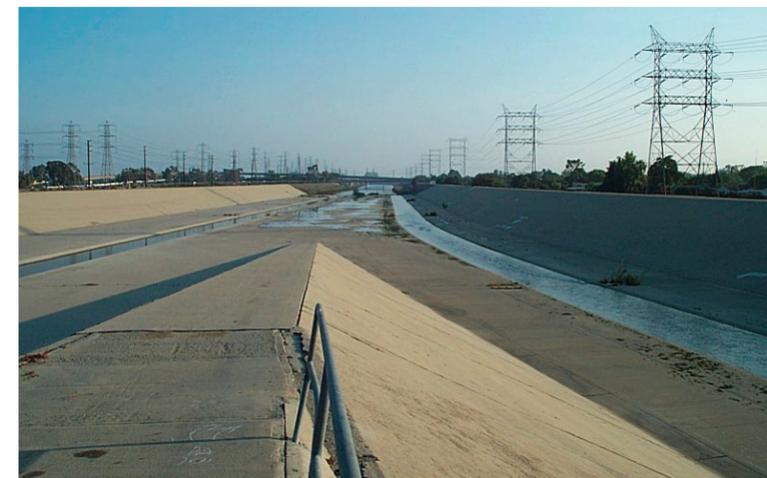
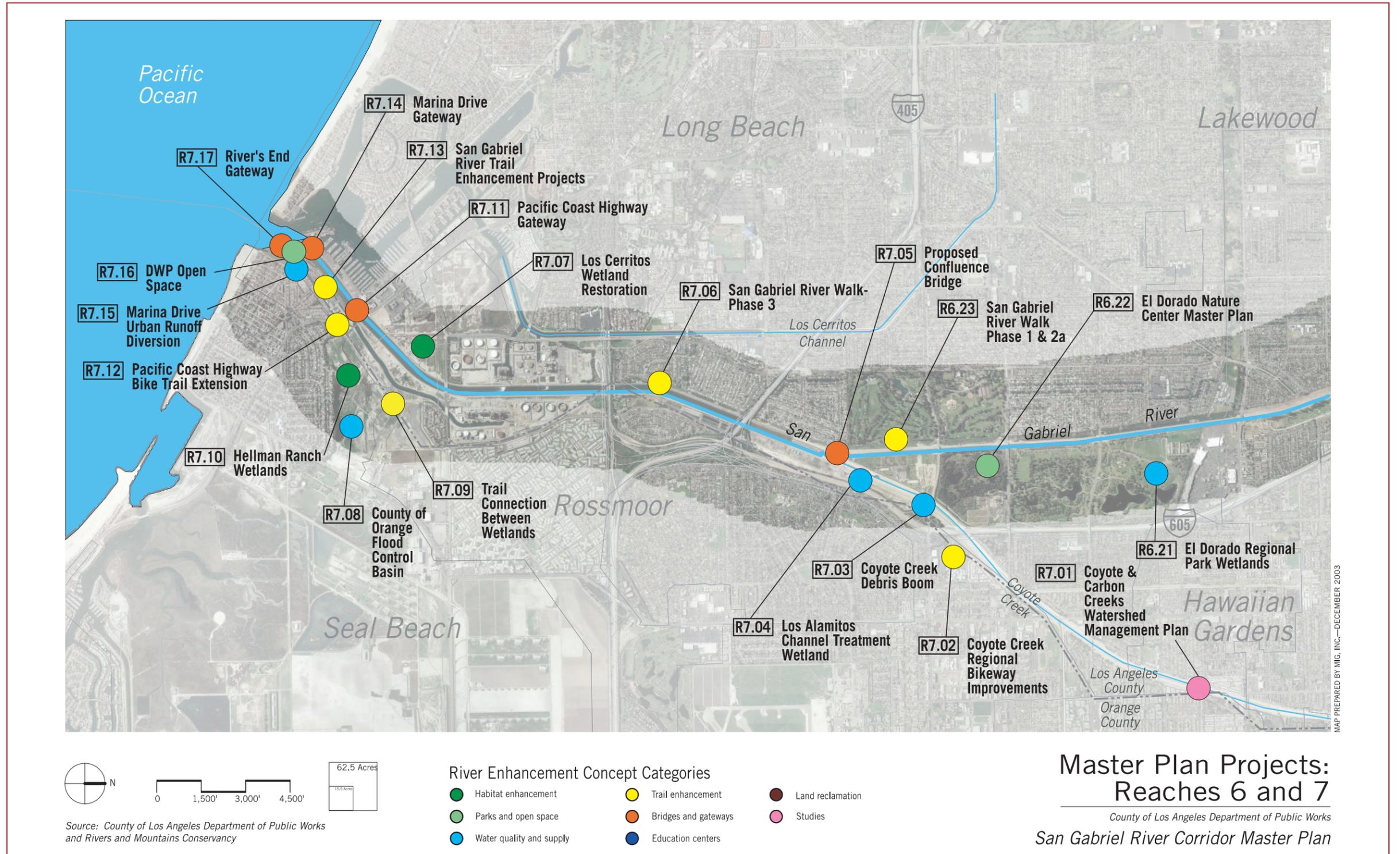


Figure 3-39. Coyote Creek merges with the San Gabriel River just below El Dorado Regional Park.



Map 3-8. Master Plan Projects: Reaches 6 and 7.

**sR7.08 County of Orange Flood Control Basin**

This project is a modification of the existing Los Alamitos basin and pump station to expand the flood capacity for runoff flowing from southwest Orange County. Flooding problems will be alleviated in the community of Rossmoor. This project is also being coordinated with the ongoing ACOE Coyote Creek Watershed Study (see R7.01).

**R7.09 Trail Connection Between Wetlands**

This project will connect bike trails within the City of Seal Beach to provide a complete circuit around the community linking several parks and open space areas.

**R7.10 Hellman Ranch Wetlands**

Potential acquisition by the City of Seal Beach of 100-acre, deed restricted property and restoration of tidally influenced trail wetland and upland habitat areas, with trail connection to Gum Grove Park and San Gabriel River Bike Trail contemplated.

**R7.11 Pacific Coast Highway Gateway**

This project will provide a key entry point to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail for the Cities of Seal Beach and Huntington Beach.

**R7.12 Pacific Coast Highway Bike Trail Extension**

This proposed extension of the Pacific Coast Highway Bike Trail through Seal Beach will connect the San Gabriel River Bike Trail to a major north/south coastal route. The final design stage has been completed but the project has not yet been constructed.



Figure 3-40. The Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project will result in a saltwater wetlands habitat.



Figure 3-41. The River's End café is near the mouth of the river in Seal Beach.

**R7.13 San Gabriel River Trail Enhancement**

This project by the City of Seal Beach will rehabilitate the existing San Gabriel River Bike Trail. The north section of the project includes Marina Drive to Pacific Coast Highway and the south section includes Marina Drive to First Street. It will introduce new signage, fencing, educational kiosks, new picnic and bicycle storage areas, and native landscaping and vegetation. The restoration will provide public awareness and education, as well as low-impact recreation.

**R7.14 Marina Drive Gateway**

This project included the construction of a regional trail and landscaping along Marina Drive from 1st Street to 5th Street and provided a key entry point to the San Gabriel River Bike Trail for the Cities of Seal Beach and Long Beach. There was also a street pavement reduction from four lanes to two lanes. This project has already been completed.

**R7.15 Marina Drive Urban Runoff Diversion**

The City of Seal Beach is seeking to enhance the capacity of the West End Pump Station to provide protection equivalent to the 25-year storm flow and will also construct a low flow diversion to the sewer system. This project will improve water quality to both the San Gabriel River and to Seal Beach. This project is currently 50 percent through its design stage and the City is seeking to obtain permits from the Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD).

**R7.16 Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Open Space**

This project concerns the future dedication of land for a passive open space area at the mouth of the San Gabriel River. The amount of land dedication is to be negotiated between the City of Seal Beach and property owner during

project entitlement consideration. It will have direct connections to four other projects – R7.11, R7.13, R7.14 and R7.17.

**R7.17 River's End Gateway**

The City of Seal Beach received grants from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) to study open space opportunities throughout the City and to prepare concept plans for a staging area for the San Gabriel River Bike Trail at its terminus in Seal Beach. Enhancements at the staging area, which are part of overall improvements to the San Gabriel River Bikeway (projects R7.06, and R7.17), include landscaping, decorative gates, water fountains, and benches. The project is 50 percent through its design phase.

**3.7 RIVER CORRIDOR-WIDE PROJECTS, POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Most of the 134 physical projects identified by stakeholders are specific to particular locations along the San Gabriel River. There are also river corridor-wide projects that link and complement the individual project efforts and create an identity for the river as a whole.

River corridor-wide projects, policies, programs, and design guidelines are needed to respond to key issues such as maintenance, urban stormwater pollution prevention, or homelessness that continue to challenge decision-makers and the communities along the river. These issues need to be addressed comprehensively, bringing all affected communities together to be part of the solution. These river corridor-wide activities will lead to programs designed to bring about desired change.

**3.7.1 River Corridor-Wide Projects**

These projects are river corridor-wide (CW), rather than for specific sites.

**CW1 Wayfinding System**

A system of signs, markers and other navigation aids will provide directional information to orient trail users to where they are in relation to the river, connecting trails, points of interest and nearby cities.

**CW2 River Identity**

A logo and other design elements will be incorporated into the signage used for the wayfinding system, creating an overall identity for the San Gabriel River.



Figure 3-42. A new logo for the San Gabriel River Trail will help create an identity for the entire river.



Figure 3-43. The San Gabriel River Trail would run along both sides of the river in the future.

### CW3 Integrated Regional Trail System

An integrated regional trail system will emerge from the completion of individual trail projects, complemented by corridor-wide enhancement efforts and design guidelines. One component of the integrated Regional Trail System is the proposal to expand the current San Gabriel River Bike Trail by developing a bike trail on both sides of the river and ensuring that necessary amenities, such as comfort stations, are provided. Another component is the set of design guidelines for local trail projects that will provide a cohesive, identifiable look for all trails intersecting the San Gabriel River corridor.

### CW4 Multi-Objective Use of Corridor Rights-of-Way

Large utility tower rights-of-way create open areas along the river corridor. Utility companies own most of these areas, which offer limited public use due to safety, maintenance and operational requirements. However, utility corridors can be opened to the public along selected portions of the river, by introducing community- and habitat-friendly uses such as gardens, parks and trails. Planting with native vegetation also increases habitat and reduces maintenance costs for utility companies.



Figure 3-44. Southern California Edison and the LA Department of Water and Power own much of the land immediately adjacent to the river.

### 3.7.2 River Corridor Policies and Programs

The San Gabriel River Master Plan will provide for development and adoption of the following policies and programs (PP) to ensure progress toward the overall vision, goals and objectives, and project performance criteria.

#### PP1 Design Guidelines

Standards and guidelines provide site and building design information to encourage new development and other land use projects that are compatible with the vision and goals of the Master Plan. The Los Angeles River Design Guidelines are functional standards for trails, lighting, fences, bridges and other landscape elements that will also be applicable to the San Gabriel River. These functional standards will be complemented by the “place-making” reach design palettes specific to the San Gabriel River, drawing upon materials, colors, forms and textures that reflect the river’s distinct character. (See Section 3.7.3 Design Guidelines, pages 3-40 through 3-48, for more a comprehensive description of this policy.)

#### PP2 Access

Guidelines will be developed to establish parameters for public access enabling visitors to safely experience (“touch”) the river corridor in ways compatible with flood control, water quality, habitat protection, and other vital functions. These guidelines must take into account the reality that the San Gabriel River is no longer a natural system because channelization has increased the force of rushing water and with it the risk to visitors. For this reason, past and current policy has severely limited public access to the river. However, river access may be appropriate in remaining low flow, natural areas and this new policy can be implemented per the recommendations of a study focused on this specific question.

#### PP3 Use

Guidelines will be established for determining permitted and prohibited uses within the river corridor by type of activity, location, and other considerations (for example, developing a dog control policy).

**PP4 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

All new structures and trails that will be used by the general public will be compliant with ADA standards, wherever applicable.

**PP5 Operational Access**

Access will be provided for ongoing maintenance and operational requirements of existing infrastructure for flood prevention, water supply and water quality, and utilities. Policy guidelines will be developed to ensure such access is integrated into all designs.

**PP6 Maintenance**

Planning, design, and construction of new and improved project site facilities and amenities in the San Gabriel River corridor must always take into account the durability and anticipated maintenance requirements of these facilities.

**PP7 Exotic Plants Removal**

Removal of arundo and other invasive weeds should be achieved where feasible. Plant removal should be carried out in a coordinated, systematic manner.

**PP8 Safety and Security**

Programs and policies should be developed to ensure the safety and security of all visitors to the river corridor. These policies will address



Figure 3-45. Policies for visitor access to the river will be guided by safety.

security patrols, lighting, fencing, transient populations, and development of defensible spaces, and other issues impacting safety and security of visitors. Access for all emergency vehicles must be ensured.

**PP9 Vector Control**

The planning and design of any new or restored wetland area for habitat or stormwater treatment must be planned in coordination with the local mosquito and vector control agency and designed to avoid vector breeding that might create a risk to public health.

**PP10 Water Quality**

Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be implemented where feasible to ensure groundwater and surface water quality.

**PP11 Stormwater Retention/Recharge**

Opportunities for stormwater collection and infiltration will be maximized without adding contamination and in accordance with sound water management techniques and public health requirements.

**PP12 Water Rights**

All surface water and groundwater associated with the San Gabriel River Watershed are subject to water rights, either through State permit or court adjudication. Projects affecting water supply will recognize existing water rights and the limitations they impose on water use, and will not diminish the amount of water available to water suppliers and other water rights holders.



COURTESY OF NORTH EAST TREES

Figure 3-46. Removing non-native plants is critical for a healthy river environment.



COURTESY OF SAN GABRIEL VALLEY MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT

Figure 3-47. Mosquitoes can be contained through proper design techniques and maintenance.



Figure 3-48. Reclaimed water is released from the San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant.

COURTESY OF NORTH EAST TREES

**PP13 Water Conservation Education**

Educational programs will encourage water conservation policies, reducing dependence on imported water.

**PP14 Reclaimed Water Usage**

Projects and programs that increase the use of reclaimed water in commercial and industrial settings will be encouraged.

**PP15 Habitat Integration**

Any project or maintenance work within the river proper should include, where feasible, a component that improves or enhances the movement of fish and wildlife and the growth of native plants within the corridor. Physical improvements or changes to the river should consider low flow channels, drop structure designs or other features that allow the movement or migration of fish. In addition, channel vegetation maintenance programs should consider sensitive clearing practices that promote a biologically

diverse mosaic of new and older growth, and use native vegetation for landscaping. However, habitat enhancement should only be considered where it will not have an adverse impact on flood control, water supply and groundwater recharge functions.



Figure 3-49. The great blue heron will make a nest in even the smallest habitat sites.

COURTESY OF DAN SLATER

**PP16 Wildlife**

All projects should encourage river visitors and users to learn to value wildlife in its natural state and to avoid harming wildlife by harassing, handling, feeding, littering or encouraging interactions with wildlife—for the health and safety of both animals and the public.



Figure 3-50. The Think River! watershed education youth program, sponsored by the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy and the City of Azusa, is an example of increasing awareness of the river. Logo courtesy of SGMRC and Ramona Rubio.

**PP17 Public Information and Education**

Programs to increase public awareness and understanding of all aspects of the river and the role they can play in protecting it will be encouraged. This includes a variety of elements such as river maps and brochures, youth watershed education programs, field trips, and other educational activities to complement and reinforce interpretive programs of the various educational centers along the river corridor.



Figure 3-51. Open space acquisition will help form a continuous greenway along the river.

COURTESY OF CAL POLY POMONA/SIERRA CLUB, ANGELES CHAPTER

**PP18 Economic Development**

Projects and programs should serve the economic development interests of cities along the river corridor while also helping to achieve the vision and multiple goals of the Master Plan.

**PP19 Open Space Acquisition**

Land parcels within or near the river corridor should be acquired where feasible to be adapted as public open space and habitat and for water conservation and/or flood control functions.

### 3.7.3 Design Guidelines

Design guidelines provide direction to project sponsors and designers to ensure that future improvements are compatible with the vision and goals of the Master Plan while strengthening the sense of place and image of the river. Two sets of design guidelines apply to river corridor projects: aesthetic design guidelines and functional design guidelines.

#### Aesthetic Design Guidelines by Reach

Aesthetic design guidelines create a “sense of place” for the river corridor, ensuring that all structures and landscapes reflect and express the unique identity of the San Gabriel River. Each of the seven reaches in the project area has a unique character, an individual mosaic of materials, colors, forms and landscape textures. Reach design elements are derived from prevalent plant communities, natural features or geologic formations, physical characteristics of the river channel, existing landmark structures and places, cultural elements and character-forming elements or objects. These elements together make the San Gabriel River distinct from any other Southern California river system.

Future physical improvements to the river corridor can draw from these reach design palettes. (See Appendix B for a more complete list of native plants appropriate to each reach.)

#### Reach 1: Headwaters

Deep in the interior of the San Gabriel Mountains, this reach is mainly defined by the lack of human presence and the overwhelming presence of nature. The San Gabriel River is very inviting here as it meanders over boulders and is joined by other creeks via waterfalls. Tall riparian trees such as oaks, alders and cottonwoods provide a canopy that frames the sky and mountains, making this reach more human-scale than Reach 2. Trees provide elements of wood, leaves and twigs that are not found in abundant quantities in lower reaches. There are very few structures in this reach, with the exception of the service road and the Pasadena Bait Club.

#### Materials

- Wood (primary building material)
- Large river rocks and boulders (secondary building material)
- Water
- Rock outcrops



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Figure 3-52. The Reach 1 palette emphasizes natural materials.

- Riparian trees (alders, willows, cottonwoods, oaks)

#### Forms

- Rocky waterfalls

- Columnar stands of tree trunks
- Moving streams
- Leaves of all sizes and shapes
- Rocky, uneven surfaces
- Thick foliage

#### Colors

- Greens (leaves)
- Browns (bark)

- Blues (water, sky)

#### Native Plants

- *Acer macrophyllum* (big-leaf maple)
- *Alnus rhombifolia* (white alder)
- *Amorpha fruticosa* (false indigo)
- *Baccharis salicifolia* (mule fat)



Figure 3-53. The Reach 2 palette is influenced by Art Deco, with intense colors and dramatic forms.

- *Ceanothus sp.* (California lilac)
- *Mimulus aurantiacus* (bush monkeyflower)
- *Quercus chrysolepsis* (canyon live oak)
- *Rosa californica* (California rose)
- *Rubus ursinus* (California blackberry)
- *Salix exigua* (narrow-leaved willow)
- *Salix lasiolepis* (arroyo willow)
- *Salix laevigata* (red willow)

- *Umbellularia californica* (California bay laurel)

#### Reach 2: San Gabriel Canyon

The most dramatic stretch of the San Gabriel River, this reach is clearly defined by the deeply cut canyon through the steep mountains. The sky is prominently framed by the mountains and the air is much clearer than in lower reaches. Slopes are coated in coastal sage scrub and mixed chaparral plant communities, all low-growing plants within a fire-dependent

ecosystem. Mixed with the soft textures of the plants are the rough textures of rock outcroppings. The Morris and San Gabriel Dams and Reservoirs provide dramatic counterpoints to the steep mountain slopes. Built elements like the Art Deco design of Morris Dam and the engineered earthen rock San Gabriel Dam provide inspiration for future projects.

#### Materials

- Concrete (primary building material)
- Boulders (secondary building material)
- Water
- Sediment/Sand
- Low sage scrub plants (buckwheat, yucca, artemesia)

#### Forms

- Tall, towering, historic concrete dam (Morris)
- Art deco elements of Morris Dam
- Rough, rocky walls
- Velvety carpeted scrub plants

#### Colors

- Turquoise blue of sediment-laden reservoir waters
- Dark midnight blue of oxygen-poor reservoir waters
- Deep sky blue
- Rust (fall color of buckwheat on steep slopes)
- Browns
- Greens
- White (yucca, buckwheat flower)

#### Native Plants

- *Alnus rhombifolia* (white alder)
- *Amorpha fruticosa* (false indigo)
- *Baccharis salicifolia* (mule fat)
- *Ceanothus sp.* (California lilac)
- *Elymus condensatus* (giant wild rye)
- *Heteromeles arbutifolia* (toyon)

- *Mimulus aurantiacus* (bush monkeyflower)
- *Platanus racemosa* (western sycamore)
- *Populus fremontii* (Fremont's cottonwood)
- *Quercus chrysolepsis* (canyon live oak)
- *Rosa californica* (California rose)
- *Rubus ursinus* (California blackberry)
- *Salix exigua* (narrow-leaved willow)
- *Salix lasiolepis* (arroyo willow)
- *Salix laevigata* (red willow)
- *Umbellularia californica* (California bay laurel)

**Reach 3: Upper San Gabriel Valley**

The San Gabriel Mountains loom above the gentle inclines of the alluvial fans, which spread out from the mouth of the canyon. At the base of the mountains one can still see vast expanses of rare alluvial fan sage scrub plants, unique to this geologic formation. Spikes of yucca flowers contrast with the softer mounds of sage. The hundreds of feet of unconsolidated sand and gravel supply the construction industry with tons of material each year. The San Gabriel River is the source of river rock, a popular building material for Craftsman-style homes and landscapes throughout the San Gabriel Valley. Historic citrus groves once covered this region, an important chapter in the history of the Valley.

**Materials**

- River rocks, gravel
- Wood
- Alluvial fan sage scrub plants (black sage, white sage, artemesia, encelia, yucca)
- Scent of sages (when brushed or touched)



Figure 3-54. The Reach 3 design palette reflects the arts and crafts influence with river rock walls and broad sweeps of native sage.

**Forms**

- Craftsman/arts and crafts-style structural elements (river rock walls, pilaster structures)
- Soft, mounded shrubs (sage scrub expanse)
- Prickly yucca filifera and opuntia
- Orange groves

**Colors**

- Soft greens
- Gray-green
- Bright green accent
- Gray tones (river rock)
- Sand, beige, tans
- Yellow (sunflower)

**Native Plants**

- *Amorpha fruticosa* (false indigo)
- *Baccharis pilularis* (coyote brush)
- *Baccharis salicifolia* (mule fat)
- *Ceanothus sp.* (California lilac)
- *Elymus condensatus* (giant wild rye)
- *Heteromeles arbutifolia* (toyon)
- *Malosma laurina* (laurel sumac)



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