

NEWS RELEASE



Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

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Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Opens Stunning New Park in Los Angeles River Corridor near Downtown

Confluence Plaza revitalizes and highlights the heavily travelled area with state-of-the-art interactive water feature and fountains.

Los Angeles, March 30, 2011—Los Angeles River supporters, city officials, park advocates, and community members gathered in the early evening today 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 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 Ed P. 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."

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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.

“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.

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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.

The interactive water feature and fountains were designed by WET which contributed in-kind services to complete the feature at the plaza. WET unleashes the magic of the elements to create experiences that reconnect people with their world, with their senses and with each other. In addition to the new water feature at Confluence Plaza, and those at The Grove, the Los Angeles Music Center, and the Port of Los Angeles, WET has created the world's most high-profile water fountains, at the Bellagio in Las Vegas, Revson Fountain at Lincoln Center, and the largest choreographed fountains in the world at the Burj Khalifa in Dubai.

The mission of the Santa Cecilia Orchestra is to share the beauty and inspiration of classical music with Southern California audiences through live performances and stimulating music education programs, giving special focus to Latino communities that are underserved and underrepresented by the arts. Music Director and Conductor Sonia Marie De Leon de Vega is an internationally recognized leader in Los Angeles music.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is a State agency established by the California Legislature in 1980. Through direct action, alliances, and partnerships, the Conservancy's mission is to strategically buy back, preserve, protect, restore, and enhance treasured pieces of Southern California to form an interlinking system of urban, rural, and river parks, open space, trails, and wildlife habitats that are easily accessible to the general public.

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The MRCA is a local government public entity dedicated to the preservation and management of open space, urban parkland, watershed lands, trails, and wildlife habitat. The MRCA manages more than 60,000 acres of public parkland and provides natural resources and scientific expertise, critical regional planning services, park construction, operations, fire prevention and ranger services, as well as education and leadership programs for thousands of youth each year. It is one of the lead agencies revitalizing the Los Angeles River and its tributaries.

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