

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

LOS ANGELES RIVER CENTER AND GARDENS
570 WEST AVENUE TWENTY-SIX, SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065
PHONE (323) 221-8900
FAX (323) 221-9001



March 26, 2007

Dr. Carol Armstrong
City of Los Angeles
1149 South Broadway Street, Suite 600
Los Angeles, California 90015

**Draft Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan,
Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report
and Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Dr. Armstrong:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy congratulates the Los Angeles River Committee on the completion of the Draft Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (Plan). Through a collaborative effort the City of Los Angeles has produced a comprehensive document that will provide the resources necessary to restore the Los Angeles River (River). The document overall is excellent and demonstrates a considerable amount of work and thought on the part of the City.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) is the principal state agency charged with planning and conservation for the Santa Monica Mountains Zone and the Rim of the Valley Corridor pursuant to Division 23 of the Public Resources Code. All portions of the Los Angeles River watershed north of the City of Vernon fall within Conservancy jurisdiction. The Conservancy is charged with strategic planning in open space preservation, creation, development, and management. The Conservancy has completed or is currently planning numerous projects and parks within the Los Angeles River watershed, both adjacent to the River and tributaries as well as upland areas. These parklands increase recreation opportunities, create open space in urban areas and contribute to improved water quality, as well as incrementally augmenting the region's native ecosystems. We hope to be a strong partner as the City of Los Angeles carries out the Plan.

The Conservancy's comments regarding the plan are limited to the areas of our staff's direct expertise. We offer the following comments on the Plan.

Species and Habitat Suitability

A mapping and brief assessment of all existing open space nodes in direct proximity to the river and its tributaries would improve the plan and environmental document. The current species list evaluated should include a broader range of taxonomic classes. The existing list,

from the University of Southern California Green Visions Habitat and Linkages Study, should be expanded and it should include a core group of riparian indicator species.

A matrix in the final documents should show the existing and future potential use of each mapped habitat node by each of these key indicator species.

Wildlife Crossings

The plan calls for a pathway along most of the river. Critical potential crossing points for amphibian and reptile species between the river and habitat nodes need to be identified. These critical crossing points should incorporate culvert features that assist species in crossing beneath these pathways.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment. Please direct any questions and further correspondence to Paul Edelman, Deputy Director for Natural Resources and Planning, at (310) 589-3200 ext. 128.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH A. CHEADLE
Chairperson