



Alternatives

6

Photos (clockwise): 1. Lashbrook Park. NPS photo. 2. Study team collaboration. NPS photo. 3. Puente Hills. NPS Photo. 4. Downtown LA skyline, city view, and the San Gabriel mountains (with Mt. Baldy in the center. Photo © David Liu.

Chapter 6: Alternatives

Introduction

The NPS evaluates four management alternatives in this special resource study. The “no action,” or current management, serves as a baseline of existing conditions. Alternatives A, C, and D, the action alternatives, emphasize collaborative management approaches to nationally recognize and protect the significant resources of the San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains study area. Two of the three action alternatives call for National Park Service (NPS) recognition and involvement.

Issues Addressed in the Alternatives

Through the scoping process, numerous stakeholders including public agencies, local residents, organizations, and elected officials identified specific issues and concerns that should be addressed in this special resource study. Based on this input, the following issue statements were developed by the study team to describe the context for this study. The alternatives explore various approaches to addressing the issues identified.

Funding

Many land management agencies in the study area lack adequate funding and staffing to meet their resource protection and recreation objectives. Nationally significant resources may warrant enhanced funding from outside of the region. While new partnerships among the region’s land management agencies and private organizations may provide additional resources and funding opportunities, some agencies lack the authorities or staffing needed to pursue such strategies.

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

Barriers to outdoor recreation in the area include: insufficient close-to-home recreational opportunities, lack of awareness of recreational opportunities, poor public transit connections to park and forest entry points, personal safety concerns, and opportunities that do not match the desired recreational activities of growing segments of the population. This is particularly apparent in some low-income and minority communities. Many children in these communities disproportionately suffer from health issues related to poor access to parks and open space, such as obesity and diabetes.

Recreation Demands

The Los Angeles area continues to experience tremendous population growth, contributing to crowding, user conflict, and resource degradation in some recreational areas. Recreation opportunities have not kept pace with demand. There is a need to disperse recreational use from the most congested and impacted areas, and to stabilize and rehabilitate areas where visitor use has negatively affected natural and cultural resources, recreation experiences, and public safety.

Ecological Communities

Greater protection is needed for the region’s threatened ecological communities, including coastal sage scrub, alluvial fan sage scrub, riparian areas, walnut woodland communities, and other native habitats, as well as for the region’s wildlife corridors and habitat linkages. Protection of these communities could be enhanced by additional scientific knowledge, expertise, technical assistance, and cooperative planning and management.

Cultural Resources

The area’s cultural resources, including the heritage resources of the Angeles National Forest and sites associated with Native Americans, Hispanic and American settlement and exploration, and other local stories, would benefit from further documentation, designations, protection, and interpretation.

Regional Identity

The study area lacks a clear sense of identity that could help connect communities to the natural and cultural resources of the San Gabriel Mountains and the Puente-Chino Hills. A stronger sense of identity would help to expand people’s awareness of the natural systems, cultural heritage, and recreational opportunities in their communities, and increase the political and financial viability of conservation and recreation-related projects.

Regional Coordination

The region’s natural, cultural, and recreation resources lack a comprehensive management plan and could benefit from a regional planning structure. Greater cooperation among regional land managers, governments, and other organizations would support leveraging resources, sharing scientific information, creating a regional identity, and meeting the needs of a complex social and ecological region.

Water

There is an ongoing need to protect and restore riparian ecosystems and provide appropriate recreational use of waterways while improving water quality, enhancing efficiency of water storage and use, and providing flood protection.

Overview of the Alternatives

The management alternatives presented in this chapter were developed in cooperation with multiple land management agencies after an analysis of public comments, recreational needs, resource issues, and significant resources. Three preliminary alternative concepts were presented for public review in the fall of 2009. Based on the comments received and further input from stakeholders, the NPS revised the preliminary alternatives. Many commenters suggested that the NPS develop an alternative that combines the best components of each of the preliminary alternatives. Therefore, the NPS developed "Alternative D: San Gabriel Region National Recreation Area: A Partnership Linking Significant Resources and Recreation." Based on public comments, preliminary alternative B, "Parks and Open Space Network," has been dropped from further consideration (see section "Alternatives Considered but Dismissed" for more information on why this alternative was dismissed).

The term "action alternative" is sometimes used to refer to all alternatives that propose a set of actions that are different from current management. The common focus of all three action alternatives is an emphasis on encouraging cooperative management of existing public lands and federal recognition for a national recreation area. These alternatives do not propose large federal land acquisitions, although small strategic purchases from willing sellers to support partnership objectives may be possible. Each action alternative seeks to enhance the capabilities of existing agencies by leveraging resources, sharing information, and cooperative planning and administration.

The alternatives described in this chapter explore a range of possible actions to address the issues described above, including federal recognition of nationally significant resources, new funding opportunities, coordinated recreational and resource planning, technical assistance, cooperative management, and resources from the NPS.

The full range of alternatives presented for consideration includes:

- **Continuation of Current Management (No Action Alternative):** Current programs and policies of existing federal, state, county and non-profit conservation organizations would remain in place and current conditions and trends would continue.
- **Alternative A: San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area (A U.S. Forest Service Designation):** The Angeles National Forest unit within the San Gabriel Mountains would be designated by Congress as a National Recreation Area which would continue to be managed solely by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).
- **Alternative B- San Gabriel Parks and Open Space Network (Dismissed):** See alternatives dismissed from further consideration.
- **Alternative C: San Gabriel Watershed National Recreation Area:** A river-based national recreation area would raise the visibility of the San Gabriel River Watershed, improve river-based recreation, and offer new educational and interpretive opportunities along the river and throughout the watershed.
- **Alternative D: San Gabriel Region National Recreation Area (A Partnership Linking Significant Resources and Recreation):** Alternative D proposes a broader national recreation area (NRA) that would recognize the significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente Hills, explore opportunities to protect and enhance interconnected ecosystems, provide important open space connections for recreation, and offer new educational and interpretive opportunities. The NPS would offer technical assistance to surrounding communities for recreation and conservation planning.

Case Studies

Throughout the chapter, case studies are presented to help illustrate the ideas in the alternatives. The case studies emphasize how partnership and cooperative management efforts in urban areas have been successfully implemented in other park and recreation areas.

Alternatives Considered But Dismissed

Public review of the preliminary alternatives revealed a high level of dissatisfaction for preliminary alternative B, the San Gabriel Parks and Open Space Network (see Appendix F for a description of preliminary alternative B). Commenters who favored components of alternative B preferred these components in combination with proposals included in preliminary alternatives A and C. Components of alternative B that were favored include the potential protection of rivers and riparian areas, and the opportunity for NPS technical assistance to plan for habitat connections and provide close to home recreation for urban communities. Some commenters expressed concerns about potential impacts on local land use control in alternative B. Technical assistance from the NPS for conservation and recreation planning has been incorporated into alternative D.



Photos (top to bottom): 1. Paseo del Rio, San Gabriel River Coastal Spreading Grounds. NPS photo. 2. Lake Palmdale. NPS photo. 3. Puente Hills. NPS photo.

Items Common to All Action Alternatives

A Partnership Approach

The National Park Service recognizes that many other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals successfully manage important natural and cultural resources and recreational opportunities within the study area. The NPS applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies. The alternatives presented retain current management and build on existing efforts by suggesting new partnerships, funding sources, and technical assistance opportunities.

U.S. Forest Service Management

U.S. Forest Service management and ownership of existing Angeles National Forest lands would be maintained in all of the alternatives. U.S. Forest Service policies would continue to be applied to management of these lands.

National Recreation Area (NRA)

Each of the three action alternatives proposes a national recreation area designation to increase the capacity to protect significant resources and to provide improved recreational opportunities for the region. Two of the national recreation area alternatives would include the establishment of a national park unit to be managed in partnership with existing agencies. The other would be a U.S. Forest Service national recreation area designation applied to existing Angeles National Forest lands. The NPS would have no role in that alternative (alternative A).

Retention of Local Land Use and Existing Regulatory Authorities

The designation of a NPS national recreation area would not establish additional regulatory or land use authorities over local governments. The NPS is not a regulatory agency. NPS land management policies and regulations would only apply to lands that the NPS acquires. The NPS would only consider acquiring land on a limited basis from willing sellers.

All of the alternatives would respect existing general plans and local zoning, as well as state and local laws and policies for lands that are not federally owned.

Protection of Water Supply, Flood Protection, and Sanitation Infrastructure Facilities and Functions

The Los Angeles metropolitan region has highly complex systems of public infrastructure to transport and store local and regional water supplies. In addition, numerous facilities are necessary to treat wastewater and manage solid waste. No alternative presented would change existing water rights, water supply operations, water treatment operations, flood protection efforts, or other agency functions necessary to maintaining public infrastructure essential for public health and safety.

All of the proposed alternatives would retain existing and future water rights. Management of water supply and treatment plants would continue under current authorities. The NRA designation would not entail any new or future beneficial uses or requirements for water supply, water quality, or air quality regulations.

This study recommends that any resulting legislation ensure that existing sanitation facilities and operations such as landfills and water treatment plants, would continue to be operated and regulated by existing agencies and would not be affected by the NRA designation.

Private Property Rights

Any legislation proposed to implement this study should specify that eminent domain would not be used for land acquisition within the NRA. The NPS would only consider acquiring land on a limited basis from willing sellers. Designation would not impact local land use authority over lands not owned by the NPS.

Fire Protection

Fire protection would remain the responsibility of existing federal, state, and local agencies (Los Angeles County, U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). The NRA partnership could work together to take a pro-active approach to coordinated resource management to reduce catastrophic fires.

Description of the Alternatives

CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)

CONCEPT

The no action alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act to provide a baseline from which to compare action alternatives. Under this alternative the NPS would have no role in the study area beyond existing national park units and programs (segments of two national historic trails and the Route 66 corridor), and financial and technical assistance programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program, the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, and the National Historic Landmark program. This alternative assumes that current programs and policies of existing federal, state, county and non-profit conservation organizations would continue at existing levels and current conditions and trends would continue.

MANAGEMENT

Existing cooperative management efforts between agencies would continue. Current efforts to protect wildlife corridors and provide new recreational opportunities would continue to occur on a case-by-case basis as existing funding allows.

The following section briefly describes the current efforts of existing land management agencies, local governments, non-profit conservation activities, and existing partnership efforts. Although fluctuations are inevitable, in most cases it is assumed for the purposes of comparison, that these actions will continue at their current levels.

Public Land Management and Access

Under the no action alternative, public land management agencies would continue their land management, visitor services, public education, and interpretation programs at approximately the current levels of activity and funding, according to current plans.

Federal, state, and local government agencies manage significant amounts of land in the study area. Over two-thirds of the study area is currently managed by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Angeles National Forest. Other agencies that manage land include the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management, Los Angeles County Parks, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat

Preservation Authority, and local governments.

Angeles National Forest (ANF): The ANF (approximately 415,000 acres within the study area) represents 70% of the open space in Los Angeles County. Although originally established in 1892 for the purpose of watershed protection, the current primary use of the ANF is public recreation. The ANF also contains extensive infrastructure that serves the Los Angeles region including power lines, water supply and flood control facilities, media communications facilities, and roads. Activities within the ANF are managed according to the 2006 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to allow sustained use and protection of a variety of forest resources.

The majority of funding for the ANF is dedicated to wildfire preparedness and fuels reduction. Budgets for visitor management, interpretation, and education have remained flat while visitation has continued to increase over time. In the no action alternative, the ANF would continue to remain inadequately funded for visitor management and programming.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages over 3,000 acres of land in the study area. These lands consist of isolated parcels scattered throughout Soledad Basin and the Antelope Valley. Most of the parcels are designated for sale or exchange under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). Several parcels are designated for exchange with the U.S. Forest Service. Parcels with habitat value in the Antelope Valley will be retained or consolidated to reflect their value (BLM 1994 and 2006).

California State Land Conservancies: Two California state land conservancies have jurisdictions within the study area. The entire study area is within the jurisdiction of the Lower Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC). The western San Gabriel Mountains are also included in the jurisdictional boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Both state land conservancies would continue to work in partnership with local governments, other public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners to purchase, protect, restore, and enhance resources, and to provide public access to open space.

National Park Service: No new unit of the national park system would be established under this alternative. The NPS would continue to provide technical and financial assistance through existing park system units and through technical assistance

and grant programs. The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail would continue to partner with local parks and recreation agencies to provide interpretation of the Anza Trail and mark the historic route. The recently established Old Spanish National Historic Trail would likely have some local interpretation following the completion and implementation of its comprehensive management plan. The Route 66 Corridor Program would continue to administer cost-share grants to preserve and interpret the Route 66 corridor, and provide technical assistance to public and private entities to address Route 66 preservation needs.

The National Park Service would continue to provide technical assistance to local communities and organizations through the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Grants for local recreation and conservation would continue to be administered through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Such assistance programs would be assumed to continue at current levels.

California State Parks: The Angeles District of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks) is responsible for managing state parks within the study area, including the Pio Pico State Historical Park. Currently the park's hours of operations have been limited by funding cuts. Under the no action alternative, the Pio Pico State Historical Park would continue to operate on a limited basis contingent on funding availability.

Los Angeles County Parks: Within the study area, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation manages trails and parks. Under the no action alternative, these parks and trails would continue to be managed according to current plans. The county would continue planning and development of its trail system.

Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority): The Habitat Authority is dedicated to the acquisition, restoration, and management of open space in the Puente Hills for preservation of the land in perpetuity, with the primary purpose of protecting biological diversity. The agency also provides opportunities for outdoor education and low-impact recreation. The Habitat Authority's jurisdiction extends within eastern Los Angeles County approximately from the intersection of the 605 and 60 Freeways in the west to Harbor Boulevard in the east. The Habitat Authority currently manages approximately 3,860 acres of preserved public open space, of which 1,878 is owned by the Habitat Authority. In the no action alternative, the Habitat Authority would continue to acquire and manage lands within its jurisdiction.

Local Land Use Authorities

Local governments govern and manage land within the study area. The 50 cities and unincorporated areas would continue to conserve open space and provide recreational opportunities where possible. Often local governments rely on state and federal grant programs to acquire land for recreation and conservation. Local agencies would continue to provide services as funding allows. Coordination and communication between local governments would continue to occur on a case-by-case basis.

Non-Profit Conservation Activities

It is assumed that non-profit conservation activities would continue at approximately the same levels. Numerous organizations in the region work to conserve lands and recreation areas. This includes a network of land trusts in the San Gabriel Mountains foothills that work towards conserving open space and habitat on the urban-wildland fringe. The Amigos de los Rios is a non-profit organization that led the effort to define the Emerald Necklace vision. The San Gabriel Mountains Forever Campaign is a coalition of environmental, wilderness, and social justice organizations working to create more recreational opportunities and protect resources. Many other organizations, local community groups, and clubs also play important roles in supporting, maintaining, and advocating for resources and recreational opportunities.

Existing Partnership Efforts

Existing partnership efforts would continue at current levels. The following section describes current partnership efforts within the study area.

Joint Power Authorities: A Joint Powers Authority (JPA) is an entity permitted under state law, whereby two or more public authorities (e.g. local governments, or utility or transport districts) can operate collectively. Joint powers agencies have been successful in leveraging funding and implementing projects which serve the purposes of each member agency. Several joint powers authorities that are responsible for recreation and land management within the study area are described below.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) is a joint powers public agency established in 1985. A partnership between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Conejo and Rancho Simi Recreation and Park Districts, the MRCA is dedicated to the preservation of open space and parkland, watersheds, trails, and wildlife habitat. In addition, the MRCA manages

and provides ranger services, fire protection, planning and natural resources expertise, and educational programs for almost 50,000 acres of public lands and parks under its or the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's ownership.

The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) is a joint powers entity of the RMC and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD). Through the WCA, the RMC and Los Angeles County conduct joint projects to provide open space, habitat restoration, and watershed improvement in the watersheds of both the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River.

The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA) was established to provide for the proper planning, conservation, environmental protection, and maintenance of lands within the Puente-Chino Hills corridor area. WCCA's governing board consists of representatives from the cities of Brea, Whittier, Diamond Bar, La Habra Heights, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Fish and Game (ex officio member), and Los Angeles County, plus two public members.

San Gabriel River Master Plan: This plan represents a shared vision for the San Gabriel River corridor. A steering committee representing cities, other public agencies, water groups, and community and environmental groups developed this shared vision of the river and a plan for how to achieve it.

The master plan integrates many objectives, including habitat, recreation, open space, flood control, water supply and economic development, and it identifies priorities, provides guidance, and coordinates multiple goals of the many jurisdictions and other stakeholders that share the river.

Emerald Necklace – Park Network: The Emerald Necklace is a vision for a 17-mile loop of parks and greenways connecting 10 cities and nearly 500,000 residents along the Río Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers. The Emerald Necklace Accord is an agreement among agencies of the region to preserve the rivers and tributaries for recreational, open space and native habitat conservation and restoration purposes. Examples of projects completed by the partnership include the Encanto Nature Park Bioswale and Outdoor Classroom project in Duarte and Lashbrook Park in El Monte.

Greater Los Angeles County Region Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP): Local agencies, organizations, cities, and county government within the greater Los Angeles County region collaborated to develop the Integrated

Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) that focuses on water resource management while creating a platform for future funding. A critical component of the planning effort is identifying projects that would help achieve the goals and objectives of the IRWMP. The plan is being funded by Proposition 50, and Chapter 8 grants administered by the State Department of Water Resources. The IRWMP for the Greater Los Angeles County Region seeks to make the region more competitive for funding beyond Proposition 50.

Water Supply, Flood Protection, and Sanitation Infrastructure

Much of the study area includes densely developed urban areas within the San Gabriel Valley. These areas require extensive public infrastructure for water supply, flood protection, and sanitation infrastructure. In the no action alternative, water districts and public agencies would continue to manage water supply, flood protection, and sanitation infrastructure at current levels. Such agencies would also continue existing partnership efforts. Regulatory and management agencies responsible for flood control and sanitation include the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works: The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for much of the flood control and watershed management services within the study area, and manages watersheds to provide a balance between flood control, recreation, and protecting the natural environment. The DPW manages dams and spreading grounds along the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers. The DPW partners with many other agencies in its efforts to promote best management practices for activities that may affect the watershed.

Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE): The Los Angeles District of the ACOE has jurisdiction over various flood protection facilities within the San Gabriel River Watershed. The ACOE jurisdiction includes dams, floodways, and debris basins. The ACOE has agreements with the Los Angeles County Department of Recreation for its management of the recreational lands around the Santa Fe Dam, Puddingstone Reservoir, and Whittier Narrows.

Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County: The Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts are responsible for managing wastewater and solid waste management. The Sanitation Districts function on a regional scale and consist of 23 independent special

CASE STUDY: ENCANTO NATURE PARK, BIOSWALE AND OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Background

- The Encanto Nature Park Bioswale and Outdoor Classroom is one of the newest additions in the regional Emerald Necklace project, completed in December 2010.
- The project includes a 1,000 feet bioswale along the western perimeter of the park. The bioswale filters the surface water from the park before it reaches the San Gabriel River, and includes interpretive signage, native landscaping, and a small infiltration basin to manage storm runoff from the park. Other components of the project include a small outdoor nature center with interpretive displays and a kiosk, and an outdoor classroom. A nature 1,500 feet multi-use path with interpretive signage is included along the west bank of the San Gabriel River to a view point which projects nearly 200 feet out into the river channel to enhance the connection between the park and the river.
- The City of Duarte also involved at-risk youth in the project by contracting with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps for construction of the river trail and viewpoint. The City's street maintenance staff will provide long-term maintenance for the project and will receive training for native landscape maintenance from Amigos de los Rios.

Benefits

- Helping at-risk youth and providing opportunities for local employment
- Preventing pollution and contaminants from entering the San Gabriel River
- Encouraging education and exploration with its outdoor classroom and interpretive displays

Source:

<http://www.accessduarte.com>

CASE STUDY: LASHBROOK PARK, MULTIPLE-USE BENEFITS ALONG THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER

Background

- Lashbrook Park is a recently completed park established as part of the Emerald Necklace.
- Lashbrook Park is located along the east bank of the Rio Hondo bike trail within the Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction. This 1.8-acre park was completed in 2006.

Benefits

- The park site was cleared of trash and debris.
- A vegetated bioswale winds through the length of the site, using plants native to the watershed. The bioswale is designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water.
- Recreational amenities located in Lashbrook Park include picnic areas, benches, wayfinding signage, and a water fountain for use by the local community and regional trail users.



Lashbrook Park. NPS Photo.

Source:

<http://www.amigosdelosrios.org/project2.htm>

districts serving Los Angeles County. Within the study area, the Sanitation Districts manage water reclamation plants at Whittier Narrows, Pomona, and San Jose Creek; landfills in the Puente Hills and Spadra (closed); and intermodal and materials recovery facilities in the Puente Hills.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Existing national forest lands, national historic landmarks, museums, visitor centers, parks, and other sites owned by federal, state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations would continue to be interpreted as they are today. Existing national park units would continue to provide interpretation and education opportunities. Improvements in interpretive programs and media may occur as funding becomes available. Coordinated efforts to interpret the significant resources of the San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains would not occur. Education and interpretation efforts would continue to occur on a project-by-project basis.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS

New recreational opportunities and access would occur through existing agencies, organizations, and local governments as funding permits.

RESOURCE PROTECTION (ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES)

Protection of natural and cultural resources under the management of existing agencies would continue. Government grant programs, California state land conservancies, local governments, and non-profit land conservancies/trusts throughout the study area would continue to conserve and restore native ecosystems and habitat. It is assumed that these efforts would continue at current levels. Existing planning efforts to link habitat connections such as the South Coast Missing Linkages Project would continue. Implementation would be the responsibility of existing agencies and landowners.

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG): The CDFG works to maintain native fish, wildlife, plant species and natural communities for their intrinsic and ecological value and their benefits to the public. The CDFG is responsible for planning and regulatory activities related to threatened and endangered species of special concern, and related resources and activities. The CDFG also regulates hunting and sport fishing seasons in the study area, including on Angeles National Forest lands. In the no action alternative, CDFG would continue to plan for and regulate these resources and activities at current levels.

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)* would continue to work with private landowners, local and state governments, federal agencies, corporations, and other entities to conserve and protect threatened and endangered species and other species of concern on both public and private lands. The USFWS also offers incentive and grants programs for wildlife and habitat conservation.

Cultural Resource Management: Historic sites and other cultural resources on public lands would continue to be protected by the managing agencies. Documentation and preservation would be limited by current funding availability and would continue to be managed on a project by project basis. Cultural resources on private lands would be protected at the discretion of the landowner. Coordinated interpretation of cultural themes would occur on a limited basis.

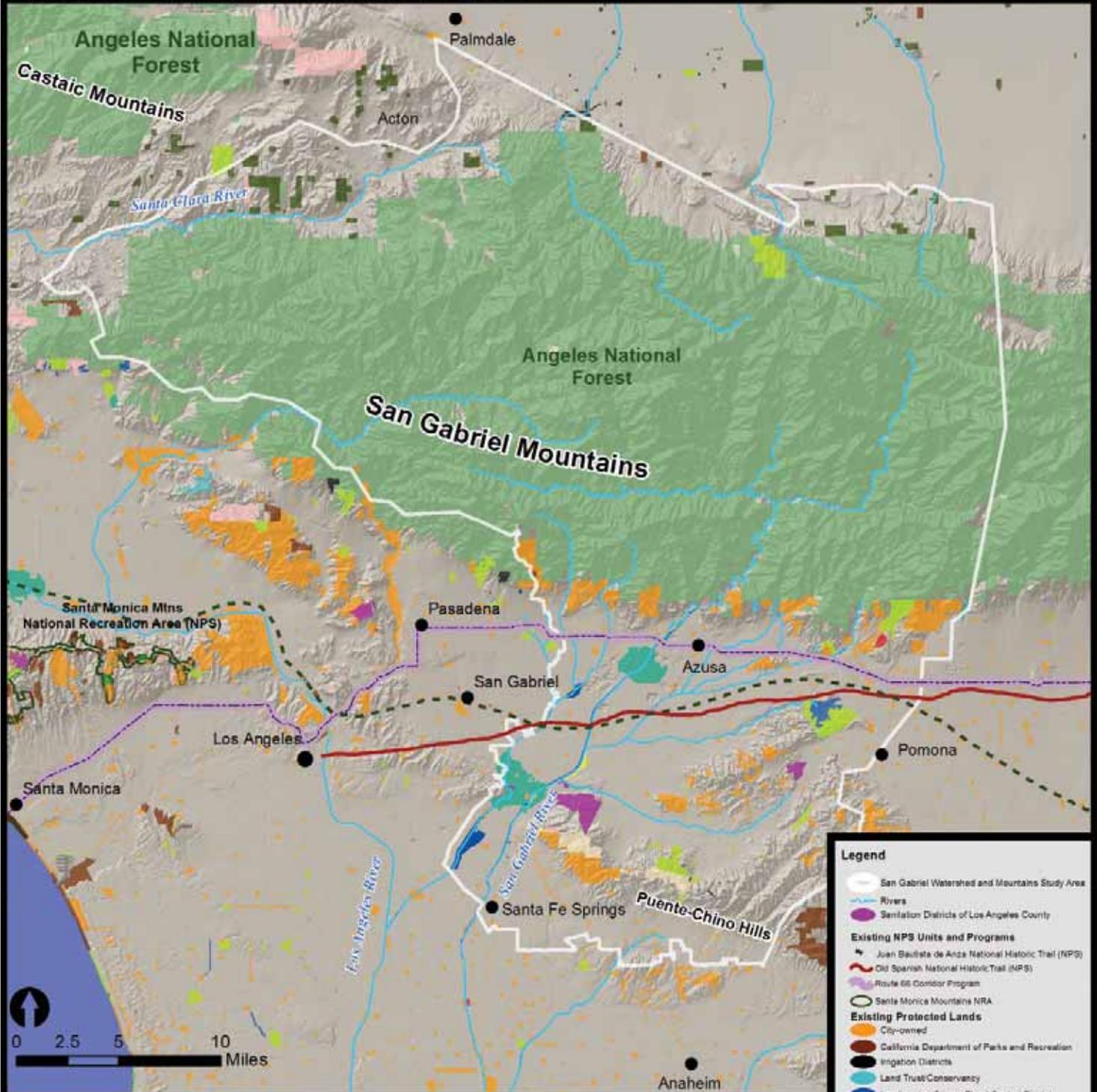
National Park Service technical assistance would continue to be available for National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Limited federal grants are also available through the Historic Preservation Fund.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Operations and maintenance of existing parks and open space would be assumed to remain at existing levels. For some agencies, more resources are available for the acquisition of lands than are available for operations and management.

Continuation of Current Management (No Action)

San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study



Continuation of Current Management Highlights

Current programs and policies of existing federal, state, county, and non-profit conservation organizations would remain in place.

Current conditions and trends would continue.

No new unit of the national park system would be established.

National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office
Updated August 2011

The NPS makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the accuracy or content of this map.

Sources: Existing Protected Lands, California Protected Areas Database (June 2010), Proposed Alternatives and Study Area (NPS), Rivers (National Hydrography Dataset, USGS).

ALTERNATIVE A: SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA (A U.S. FOREST SERVICE DESIGNATION)

CONCEPT

Congress would designate the San Gabriel Mountains unit of the Angeles National Forest (ANF) a U.S. Forest Service National Recreation Area (NRA) that would continue to be managed solely by the U.S. Forest Service. The designation would bring additional recognition, tools, and resources to the Angeles National Forest in order to steward watershed resources and ecosystems, and improve recreational opportunities.

Legislation establishing the NRA would reaffirm the primary importance of the ANF in preserving watershed and natural resources and emphasize future management practices that are compatible with resource protection. Authorizing legislation would also recognize the importance of the NRA for its recreational value and establish mechanisms to increase funding for facilities, maintenance, ecological restoration, visitor management, educational programming, and stewardship activities.

No unit of the national park system would be established.

PROPOSED AREA

The NRA would encompass the existing Angeles National Forest lands associated with the San Gabriel Mountains (see Map, Alternative A: San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area).

MANAGEMENT

The NRA lands would continue to be owned and managed by the USFS and managed according to existing USFS management policies. The legislation establishing the NRA would authorize the USFS to enter into cooperative management agreements with local agencies and conservancies to protect biodiversity and watershed resources, interpret significant resources, enhance recreational opportunities, and provide more educational and interpretive opportunities within and beyond the NRA. In addition, the legislation would provide the Angeles National Forest with the ability to accept donations from philanthropic and partner organizations to improve facilities and resources within the NRA. The NRA legislation would also direct the USFS to engage in partnership efforts and interagency coordination.

NPS Role

Existing units of the NPS outside of the proposed NRA would continue current management. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area would continue to partner with the USFS, as it currently does, on an informal basis. The NPS would continue to provide technical and financial assistance through existing programs in the greater Los Angeles area, but there would not be any specific focus or emphasis on providing new recreational opportunities and open space protection in the study area. No unit of the national park system would be established.

EXISTING AGENCIES, REGULATORY AUTHORITIES, AND LAND USE

Alternative A would not impact the authority of existing agencies and local governments or impact existing water rights and agreements. The designation would only apply to lands currently owned and managed by the USFS. The legislation would not affect existing inholdings. However, funding from appropriations, partnerships, and donations could be made available to purchase land.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

The Angeles National Forest would be recognized for its nationally significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains. Through partnerships and additional staff, as funding allows, the U.S. Forest Service would provide more interpretive information about significant resources and offer new educational programs. Educational programs would emphasize to visitors the value of watershed resources and how to recreate in a way that is compatible with protecting such resources.

The NRA could also explore new opportunities for educational programs associated with the San Dimas Experimental Forest.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS

Recreation is the primary use of the Angeles National Forest. With over 3 million annual visitors, the ANF has one of the highest national forest visitation levels in the nation. Over the past ten years, funding for recreation, interpretation, and education has remained flat.

Existing recreational opportunities would remain on the Angeles National Forest. However, increased attention and a narrower management focus resulting from the designation may encourage additional or reprioritized federal funding for enhanced recreational experiences in the San

Gabriel Mountains. This could include improved visitor management in heavily used recreational areas as a result of more forest rangers, better facilities, improved trail connections and trailheads, better educational efforts, and new approaches to manage visitation.

New partnership opportunities may also assist the ANF in fundraising for improved recreational experiences and planning for recreational connections (e.g. trails, bicycle paths).

RESOURCE PROTECTION (ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES)

The Angeles National Forest would continue to balance use and resource protection in accordance with its multiple-use policy. Legislation establishing the NRA would direct that any proposed new uses would need to be compatible with the original legislative intent of the national forest to protect watershed resources. The NRA would also bring additional recognition, tools, and resources to the ANF in order to steward the significant geological and biological resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains. For example, the San Gabriel Mountains function as a refuge for many rare and endangered species. To protect the habitats and ecosystems associated with these species, the USFS could enter into cooperative management agreements with other agencies to protect habitat that spans multiple jurisdictional boundaries providing opportunities for the dispersal of wildlife and plants within the forest and into other areas. Protection of habitat across the region would also benefit wildlife and plant adaptation to climate change.

A higher priority would be placed on ecological restoration. Extensive restoration efforts will ensue to assist in recovery from the 2009 Station Fire.

The San Gabriel Mountains are rich in cultural resources including archeology, Native American



North Fork San Gabriel River, Angeles National Forest. NPS Photo.

resources, historical recreation sites, historic mining sites, architecture, and historic flood protection structures. New resources would be allocated to document, protect, and interpret cultural resources in the San Gabriel Mountains. Programs would be designed for the public to experience the cultural, historical, and spiritual value of the San Gabriel Mountains.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Authorizing legislation may direct additional funding for operations and maintenance of the NRA allowing the ANF to provide more rangers and other staff in heavily used visitor areas. New volunteer programs would be developed to assist in the maintenance of facilities, preservation/restoration efforts, and interpretation of significant resources.

The NRA would also have dedicated staff to coordinate new partnerships and volunteer efforts.

FUNDING AND COSTS

In order to accomplish the goals of the NRA, substantial additional funding would be required, either through appropriations, partnerships, or philanthropy. The increased attention and a narrower management focus resulting from the special designation may encourage additional or reprioritized federal funding, over time, for the ANF to achieve resource restoration and protection goals, as well as provide improved recreation, interpretation, and educational facilities, and programs.

The Angeles National Forest receives the majority of its funds through allocations appropriated by Congress. In FY2011, the ANF received \$32 million in funding for the entire forest. Of this amount, 60%, or \$19.3 million, was budgeted for wildfire preparedness and fuels reduction, with the remaining 40 percent, or \$12.7 million, covering all other operations. Of this funding, \$2.9 million was appropriated for recreation, planning, resources, and wildlife management. Capital Improvement funds which includes facilities, trails, and roads maintenance was \$900,000 for the entire forest (\$131,000 of this total is for trails). When adjusted for inflation, the ANF has had a continuing drop in non-fire operational funding on the ANF since 1995.

Within the study area, total funding for the ANF for FY2011 is \$7.4 million (non-fire). Of this amount, \$1.7 million is allocated to recreation (700k), planning, resources, and wildlife management. Only \$540,000 is allocated to capital improvements including facilities, trails, and roads maintenance,

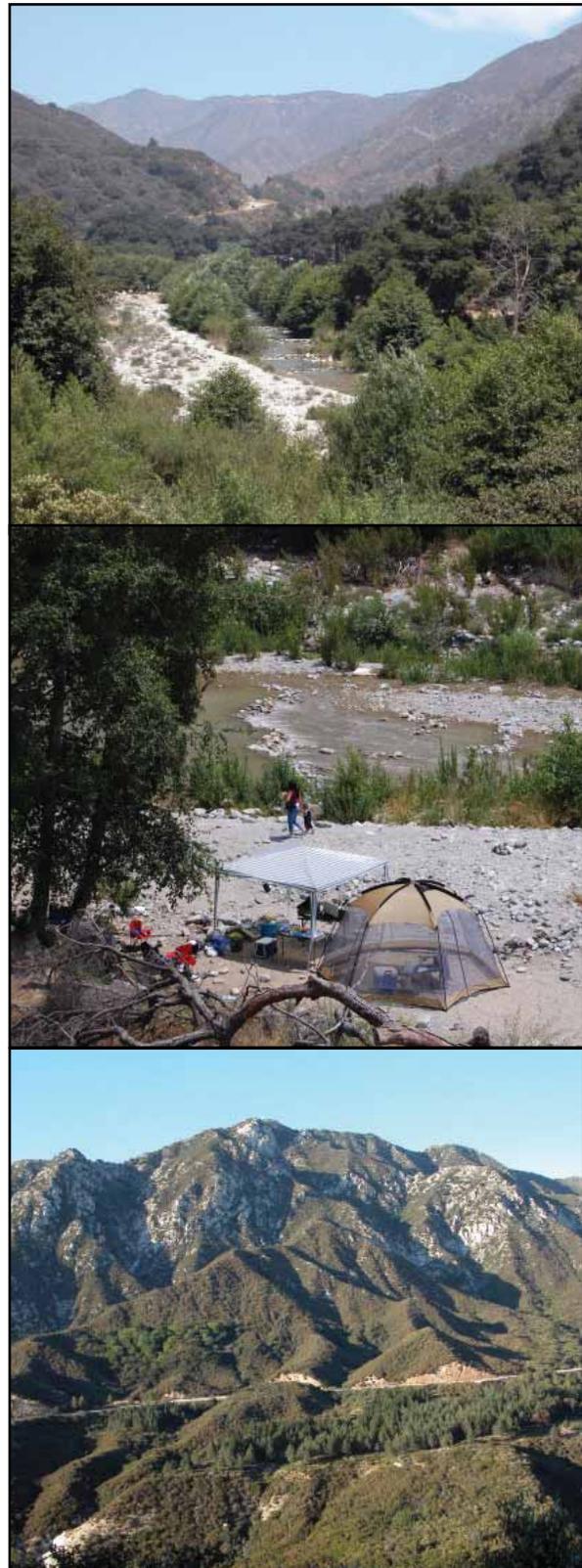
\$78k of this is allocated for trail maintenance.

The Angeles National Forest does receive revenue from a variety of forest programs and users, especially use fees collected under the Recreation Enhancement Act (the Adventure Pass). This source of funding has become increasingly important, as it can be used for a wider range of purposes than reimbursable revenue, and has helped to supplement appropriated funds. However, the cost of enforcing and administering this program is almost equal to the revenue.

Designated national recreation areas in the U.S. Forest Service do not receive stand-alone budgets separate from total forest budgets. Because all such NRAs have been carved from larger forests and retain the preexisting funding structures, the funding that flows exclusively to an NRA is difficult to track. Nor can it be shown that designations elsewhere have led to significant increases in appropriated funding.

This study recommends that the establishing legislation require specific additional funding to be allocated each year for recreation, planning, visitor services, wildlife management, and resource protection. Without this, the ANF is not likely to experience an increase of appropriated funds simply through designation of the San Gabriel Mountains as a national recreation area.

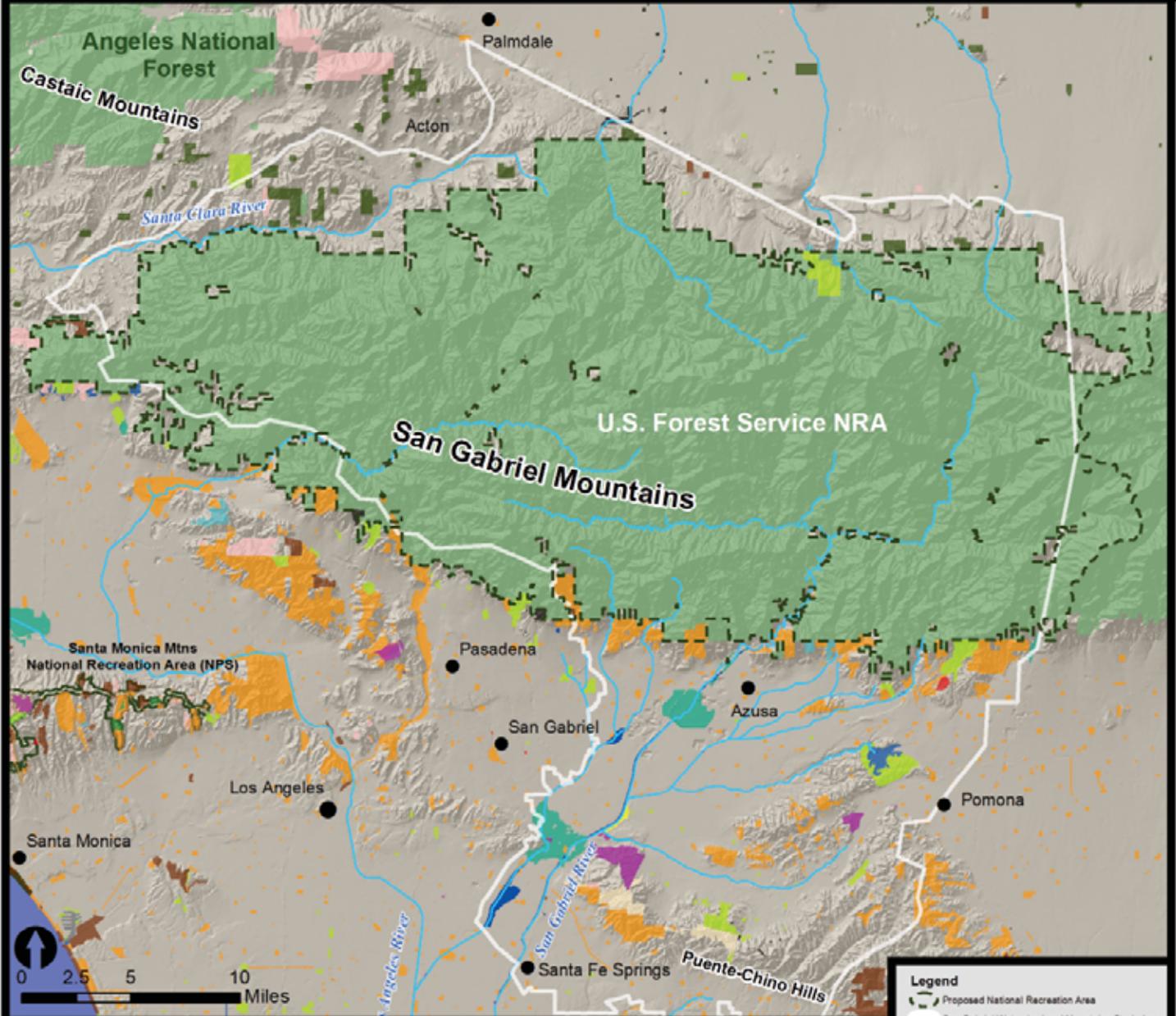
Additional opportunities for increased funding exist from outside sources. The legislation can authorize the forest to receive direct donations and provide a mechanism for establishing a nonprofit fundraising or “friends” group. The elevated visibility and attention of a new designation, coupled with an increased sense of identity for those living in the region, would enhance the ability of the ANF to more successfully raise private funds and seek special appropriations for particular projects.



Photos (top to bottom): 1. East Fork San Gabriel River, Angeles National Forest. NPS photo. 2. Day use activities, Angeles National Forest, NPS photo. 3. Western San Gabriel Mountains. NPS Photo.

Alternative A: San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area (A U.S. Forest Service Designation)

San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study



Alternative A Highlights

- The San Gabriel Mountains unit of the Angeles National Forest would be designated a National Recreation Area (NRA).
- The NRA would continue to be managed solely by the U.S. Forest Service.
- Designation would bring additional recognition, tools, and resources to the Angeles National Forest to steward resources and improve recreational opportunities.
- The NRA would reaffirm the primary importance of the Angeles National Forest in preserving watershed resources.
- Existing recreational uses would continue.
- Future management practices and uses would be compatible with protecting watersheds and significant resources.
- No unit of the national park system would be established.

Legend

- Proposed National Recreation Area
- San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Study Area
- Santa Monica Mountains NRA (NPS)
- Rivers
- Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

Existing Protected Lands

- City-owned
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- Irrigation Districts
- Land Trust/Conservancy
- Los Angeles County Flood Control District
- Los Angeles, County of
- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
- Native Habitat Preservation Authority
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- United States Bureau of Land Management
- United States Forest Service
- Watershed Conservation Authority
- Water District Lands

National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office

August 2011

The NPS makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the accuracy or content of this map.

Sources: Existing Protected Lands, California Protected Areas Database (June 2010), Proposed Alternatives and Study Area (NPS), Rivers (National Hydrography Dataset, USGS).

ALTERNATIVE C: SAN GABRIEL WATERSHED NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

CONCEPT

Alternative C proposes a river-based national recreation area (NRA) that would raise the visibility of the San Gabriel River watershed, offer new educational and interpretive opportunities along the river and throughout the watershed, and improve river-based recreation.

The NRA would be established by an act of Congress, which would provide the U.S. Forest Service, the NPS, and other land management agencies and organizations with guidance and direction to collaborate in protecting significant resources, providing new recreational opportunities, and improving visitor use of existing recreation areas.

Very little land would need to be acquired for direct management by the National Park Service. Instead, partnership arrangements among federal and state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and area landowners would achieve the conservation, recreational, and educational goals of the NRA.

PROPOSED AREA

The NRA would encompass the upper San Gabriel River watershed within the Angeles National Forest and a half-mile corridor around the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers, down to Santa Fe Springs. The general rule for planning community parks is that the park should serve areas within a one-half-mile walking distance of the park. That translates into a one-mile wide circle, with the park at its center. When applied to the San Gabriel River, this park-planning standard translates into a half-mile distance from the centerline of the river on either side, forming a one-mile wide corridor. This is the same corridor width used for the San Gabriel River Master Plan. (See Maps, Alternative C: San Gabriel Watershed NRA and Alternative C: San Gabriel Watershed NRA River Corridor Detail). The NRA would include approximately 178,000 acres of land, 89% of this area is already protected by existing agencies and organizations.

MANAGEMENT

NRA Partnership

The NRA would be managed by a voluntary partnership that would include agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area. Each partner and jurisdiction would retain

landownership, management, and decision-making authorities for lands that it owns. Private lands would continue to be regulated by local land use authorities.

The NRA partnership could include, but would not be limited to, the following agencies: the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Parks and Recreation, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, Los Angeles County, and the Watershed Conservation Authority. Through coordinated management agreements, NRA partners would be able to provide coordinated educational and recreational programming, and share funding, staff, and buildings. Other partnerships could also be established, such as with community-based organizations and tribal groups.

There are excellent examples of such partnership efforts between the NPS and other agencies. For example, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) has the authority to enter into agreements with federal agencies for the care, maintenance, administration, and control of lands under their jurisdiction. Examples of such agreements are in place at Redwoods National and State Parks and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Through formal management agreements, the NPS and CDPR share funding and operational functions such as interpretation, resource management, and facility maintenance.

The primary functions of the NRA partnership would be to: 1) develop and implement a coordinated management strategy for the NRA to improve recreational experiences, public safety, research opportunities, information and educational programs, and habitat and wildlife protection, 2) seek outside funding for the goals and programs of the partnership and its members, and 3) coordinate a voluntary, shared information network in which local communities within NRA and surrounding communities could participate in delivering coordinated interpretive messages and education programs about the San Gabriel River.

Land Management

Agencies and organizations that own and manage land within the NRA would continue to manage their lands according to their own policies and regulations.

NPS Role

The primary role of the NPS in alternative C would be: 1) coordinating the formal partnership that would manage or coordinate activities within the NRA and 2) providing interpretation and education.

The NPS would take the lead in the coordination and administration of the NRA partnership, providing technical, planning, and administrative services, and developing a comprehensive management strategy for the NRA. Through cooperative management agreements, the NPS could also provide education, interpretation, law enforcement and other services to partner agencies.

The NPS would have a role in developing coordinated interpretive messages for the watershed information network. The NPS would offer interpretive and educational programs within the NRA and at area schools.

The NPS would have no land use regulatory authority for lands that it does not own. As funding permits, the NPS would be authorized to acquire lands from willing sellers within the NRA to protect significant resources. Any land areas acquired by the NPS would likely be relatively small. Most of the lands within the proposed NRA are publicly owned and would continue to be managed by existing agencies and organizations.

U.S. Forest Service Role

The Angeles National Forest lands would continue to be owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service. As in alternative A, the NRA legislation could provide the U.S. Forest Service with the authority to enter into cooperative management agreements to protect biodiversity and watershed resources, interpret the significance of its resources, enhance recreational opportunities, and provide more educational and interpretive opportunities within San Gabriel River watershed. In addition, the legislation would provide the ANF with the ability to accept donations from philanthropic and partner organizations to improve facilities and resources within the NRA. The NRA legislation would also direct the USFS to engage in partnership efforts and interagency coordination. The U.S. Forest Service may require additional funding to participate in new partnership and coordination efforts.

EXISTING AGENCIES, REGULATORY AUTHORITIES, AND LAND USE

The majority of the lands within the proposed NRA (almost 90%) are already protected by various agencies and organizations. Each agency and organization would continue to protect these lands

according to their own management authorities and policies.

The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County facilities would be exempted by the legislation establishing the NRA from the special use permit provisions typically required for landfills within national recreation area; however, all existing permit requirements would stay in place.

With this exemption in place, Alternative C would not impact the authority of any existing agencies, local governments. Nor would it impact water rights and agreements. NPS policies would apply only to those lands acquired by the NPS. Private lands and inholdings would continue to be regulated by local land use authorities (See Actions Common to All Alternatives).

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Through new interpretive and educational programs, the NRA partnership would provide opportunities for learning and education to help teach and engage residents of all ages about the significant natural and cultural resources within the San Gabriel River watershed. Examples of interpretive messages would include the history and importance of water resources, regional biodiversity, the geological significance of the San Gabriel Mountains, Native American history and prehistory, the role of fire on the landscape, the impacts of the Station Fire, and early California settlement.

The NRA partnership would coordinate a voluntary information network to partner with established environmental education centers, visitor centers, etc. throughout the watershed to help augment and enrich interpretive and educational programming related to the significance of the San Gabriel River Watershed. The primary role of the NPS within the NRA would be to lead the effort to provide coordinated interpretive messages and educational programs. An example of such a network is described in the *Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network case study*.

In addition to programs conducted within the NRA by NPS and US Forest Service staff and volunteers, NRA staff would coordinate with local school districts and area youth organizations to conduct programs to instill messages of environmental stewardship and engage youth about the natural world around them. When needed and as funding permits, new facilities and programs may be developed to support educational efforts. The NPS Junior Ranger program could be promoted for visiting school-aged children. Given the rich cultural heritage of the region, there is also opportunity to

inspire youth about the history and culture of the NRA resources.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS

Recreational uses and activities would be determined by the existing land management agency (e.g. the U.S. Forest Service and local park districts would continue to determine what recreational activities are appropriate according to their own agency policies).

The NRA partnership would explore various opportunities to increase the amount and variety of public open space, parks and recreational lands along the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo river corridors. Recreational opportunities that are compatible with maintaining watershed values and high quality habitat would be emphasized.

The NRA partnership would seek to provide a higher level of management for impacted recreation areas through more law enforcement staff, more educational programming, and improvements to maintenance, facilities, and interpretive features. Agency partnerships would provide more resources to manage highly used existing recreation areas. For example, the Angeles National Forest could enter into management agreements with partner agencies to provide more staff and resources to manage visitor use in the highly used San Gabriel Canyon to provide more opportunities for visitor education and safety.

Because much of the proposed NRA outside of the Angeles National Forest is urbanized, additional opportunities to provide open space and recreational opportunities would be actively pursued. This may include working with local redevelopment authorities and private landowners to reclaim lands involving former aging industrial and commercial infrastructure and converting sites into new green public parks and open spaces. Additionally the partnership could explore enhancing existing parks and open space to achieve multiple objectives such as improved water quality, habitat enhancement, and recreational opportunities.

The partnership would seek to provide urban populations with better access to the public lands of the NRA through enhanced public transportation services. Weekend special buses from park-and-ride lots, school sites, and other transportation ideas should be fully explored to enhance public recreation access to these lands. See case study, *Transit to Trails Program*.

CASE STUDY: CHESAPEAKE BAY GATEWAYS NETWORK

Congress authorized the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network (Gateways Network) in 1998, to be administered by the National Park Service. The Chesapeake Network Gateways Network connects visitors to the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers through a network of more than 160 sites throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Voluntary Information Network

- The Gateways Network is a partnership effort to help visitors find, enjoy, and learn about the special places and stories of the Chesapeake Bay. Participants in the Gateways Network include over 160 sites including parks wildlife refuges, museums, sailing ships, historic communities, and trails. The NPS brings these places together with the goal of helping visitors understand and care about the Bay.
- Participation in the Gateways Network allows each site to become part of an integrated system for providing information to the public—through the visitor-friendly web site, guides, maps, signage, and Gateways logo.
- The NPS does not own any sites or land as part of the Gateways Network, but instead facilitates technical assistance, and interpretation for the partners. The NPS has also offered matching grants to Gateway partners for interpretation, access, conservation, and restoration projects.
- Gateways are nominated by the organizations that manage them. Nominations are reviewed by a working group that includes representatives of 14 non-profit organizations, and state and federal agencies. The Gateways participate on a voluntary basis.
- The Friends of Chesapeake Gateways, is a key non-profit partner that works to enhance the programmatic and financial capacity of the Gateways Network and provide assistance for interpretive, education, outreach, public relations, and stewardship goals.

Accomplishments

- Each Gateway is part of an integrated system for providing information to the public about the Chesapeake Bay.
- The 160 existing Gateways provide unique opportunities for the public to access, enjoy, understand and appreciate the natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources and values of the Chesapeake Bay.
- Over eleven years, Congress has appropriated \$15.4 million for the Gateways Network, with \$10 million in financial assistance awarded directly to Gateway partners through matching grants. Each \$1 of Federal money awarded has been matched by \$1.55 in non-federal funds.

Sources:

NPS 2009 Year in Review Document – Chesapeake Bay Office

The voluntary information network would identify parks and sites with recreational and learning opportunities related to the San Gabriel River Watershed. Participating sites would work together in coordinating marketing approaches for sharing information to the public. A logo could be developed for the sites to use in their materials and signs/wayfinding. At each site, visitors would find maps and guides linking one site with others pertaining to the same or related themes.

RESOURCE PROTECTION (ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES)

Primary responsibility for resource protection would remain with existing agencies and landowners. The NRA partnership would facilitate opportunities to work collaboratively to conserve and enhance resources through research, cooperative management, and restoration. Ecological communities could be enhanced by additional scientific knowledge, expertise, technical assistance, and cooperative management. The NRA partnership would also seek additional funding for resource protection.

Coordinated cultural resource protection would be an emphasis of the partnership. Cultural resources within the NRA would benefit from further study, documentation, and protection. Such efforts would improve the ability of the NRA to develop interpretive materials and programming related to cultural resources.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Existing agencies would continue to be responsible for the operation and maintenance of their lands and facilities.

Staffing

Given NPS budget constraints, it is likely that the NRA would initially have a small staff that would increase over time as funding is available. A general management plan would identify park priorities, management emphases, and required staffing for a 15-20 year timeframe. For example, the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park, established in 1999, had only two full-time equivalent staff (FTE) during its first five years of operation, a superintendent, and a chief of interpretation. By the time the park's draft general management plan was completed in 2007, the park had 6.5 FTE. The general management plan recommended 21.5 FTE over the 15-20 year period of the plan to support implementation.

Because the NPS would be managing the national recreation area in partnership with other agencies,

less staff would be required than what would be expected in a traditional national park. Partnership parks typically require staff to handle park coordination and outreach, assist partners with conservation planning, and provide interpretive and educational programs.

Based on comparisons of staffing levels for existing partnership parks with small NPS landownership, the following types of staff positions could be recommended for alternative C:

- Partnership Specialist
- Superintendent
- Administrative Assistant
- Visitor Use Assistant
- Interpretive Park Rangers
- Law Enforcement Park Rangers
- Teacher Ranger
- GIS Technician
- Volunteer/Outreach Program Coordinator
- Education Program Specialist
- Cultural Resource Specialist
- Outdoor Recreation Planner/Community Planner
- Wildlife Ecologist
- Biological Technician

In early years of park establishment, the NRA could possibly share positions with the Los Angeles-based Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) and seek assistance from the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and other parks in the area. As previously mentioned, staffing recommendations would be refined through completion of a general management plan which would identify management priorities for the NRA for a 15-20 year timeframe. The ability of the NPS to fulfill such positions would be dependent on NPS and partner funding.

Through cooperative management agreements, the NRA agency partners would be able to share staff, facilities, and funding to assist in the operations and maintenance of heavily used visitor areas. The NPS would coordinate new partnerships and facilitate the development of more volunteer programs to assist in the maintenance of facilities, preservation/restoration efforts, and interpretation of significant resources. The NRA partnership could also leverage funding and resources to improve existing facilities or provide new facilities where necessary.

Job training and conservation stewardship programs for youth and nearby community members would be offered. In addition to the positions listed above, area youth would be encouraged to be involved with service organizations by applying for positions through existing programs such as the Student Conservation Association, Youth Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps and other organizations which expose youth to the conservation and stewardship of our public lands.

LAND ACQUISITION

Lands within the NRA would remain under their current jurisdictions, with each land management agency continuing to fund its own operations. As almost 90% of the land in the proposed NRA is already protected for recreation and conservation by partner agencies (158,000 of approximately 178,000 acres), land acquisition needs would be small. Much of the remaining 20,000 acres are comprised of urbanized lands in commercial and residential use that would not be appropriate or feasible for NPS land acquisition. The NRA partnership would be eligible to request NPS funding for land acquisition within the NRA for acquisition of small areas with resource significance such as a historic site or open space with native habitat. However, it should be noted that such funding is extremely limited. Funding for land acquisition would also be available from partner agencies and through local fundraising efforts.

OPERATIONAL AND VISITOR FACILITIES

Construction of new administrative facilities for NPS operations and management would not necessarily be required to support the proposed NRA. Given the existing amount of office space available in and near the proposed NRA, it is likely that the NPS could lease administrative and operational facilities from partner agencies or through existing office space available in the area. There may also be opportunities to adaptively reuse a historic building or property through leasing if the NPS acquired land that contained such facilities. The NPS could also use partner facilities or adaptively reuse buildings to provide visitor facilities. If established, the NRA partnership would identify specific operational and visitor facilities needs through a general management plan.

CASE STUDY: TRANSIT TO TRAILS PROGRAM

Background

Transit to Trails is a pilot project created by a partnership between the NPS, the Anahuak Youth Association, The City Project, Mountains and Recreation Conservation Authority, and an anonymous donor. Transit to Trails takes inner city youth and their families on different mountain, beach, and river trips.

Program Description

- Santa Monica Mountains NRA partners with Transit to Trails to provide buses that allow school and community groups to visit the national recreation area.
- By bridging the gap between urban youth and the outdoors, Transit to Trails is not only encouraging physical activity, but also a healthy and better mental lifestyle.
- Currently, the City Project is hoping to expand the Transit to Trails pilot project to throughout Southern California and beyond. It is encouraging other park agencies to join the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority and the NPS in providing buses, rangers, and programs for Transit to Trails.

Accomplishments

- Transit to Trails provides more opportunities for area youth and their families to learn about water, land, wildlife, cultural history, and engage in physical activity through recreational opportunities.
- It also helps reduce traffic congestion and parking problems, improve air quality, and reduce run-off of polluted water into rivers and the ocean by providing a more accessible, public transportation.

Sources:

<http://www.cityprojectca.org/ourwork/forests.html>,
Public Transportation to Local National Forests Study
by USC Dept. of Geography

FUNDING AND COSTS

The NRA in this alternative would rely on the funding streams of partner agencies. Lands within the NRA would remain under their current jurisdictions, with each land management agency continuing to fund its own operations. As discussed under alternative A, legislation creating a special designation on the ANF may enhance funding or fundraising opportunities for the U.S. Forest Service to achieve resource restoration and protection goals, as well as provide improved recreation, interpretation, and educational facilities and programs.

The NPS would need additional federal funding for its administrative, educational, technical assistance, and interpretive roles. In addition, the NRA partnership could establish a fundraising organization, be a coordinating body for existing grant programs, and work together to leverage funds from a variety of sources (e.g. state bonds, Land & Water Conservation Fund) to increase and prioritize funding for projects and staff in the NRA and San Gabriel Watershed. Organizations participating within the partnership could also work together to leverage private funding and donations.

NPS operating costs of national recreation areas vary widely, depending on the amount and type of resources managed, number of visitors, level of programs offered, safety and security issues, and many other factors. Table 9: National Park Service National Recreation Area Annual Operating Budgets, shows the park operational base budgets for fiscal year 2009 of several partnership-based units that could be comparable to the NRA partnership proposed in this alternative. While no formal estimates of operating costs have been completed for this study, these examples illustrate the potential range. Boston Harbor Islands NRA, Chattahoochee River NRA, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, and Santa Monica Mountains NRA are all partnership-based NPS units comprised primarily of non-NPS lands. The annual operating base budgets for these units range from \$1.22 million to \$8.6 million. While the NRA in alternative C would be similar to Santa Monica Mountains in total acreage, the NPS-owned portion would be comparatively insignificant. Based on the size of the area, and the types of services and assistance offered through the partnership, the cost of NPS operations for the NRA could be expected to be \$1 to \$3 million. The estimated operational budget would primarily fund salaries. Additional costs would include leasing or maintaining administrative space, interpretive and educational programs, and cyclical maintenance of any NPS-owned facilities.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

Planning and implementations projects are not reflected in the operational budgets described in Table 9. With an NPS designation, the NRA would be eligible to receive funding for planning and projects through the NPS. For example, soon after establishment of the NRA, the NPS could provide initial planning funds for a general management plan which would define management priorities, more specific actions, and funding needs for the NRA. The general management plan would be completed in collaboration with the partnership agencies. A general management for a partnership park the size and scale of which is proposed in alternative C would likely take 4 to 5 years to complete and could cost between \$500,000 and \$700,000. Additional NPS funding may also be available for specific projects such as trail planning and development and interpretive materials. A general management plan would identify more specific implementation needs.

The example partnership parks listed in Table 9 also rely on private fundraising through “friends” groups. The funds raised through these groups can be used to supplement the operating budgets of the partners. At Boston Harbor Islands NRA, for example, the Boston Harbor Island Alliance is a nonprofit organization authorized through legislation to raise and manage funds for facilities and programming on partner lands. In 2008, the Alliance spent \$2.25 million for visitor programming and capital improvements within the NRA on lands owned by state, federal, municipal, and private entities. In addition, the Alliance received \$5 million for environmental mitigation projects over several years, to be used on partner lands.

These partnerships also rely on private fundraising through “friends” groups. The funds raised through these groups can be used to supplement the operating budgets of the partners. At Boston Harbor Islands NRA, for example, the Boston Harbor Island Alliance is a nonprofit organization authorized through legislation to raise and manage funds for facilities and programming on partner lands. In 2008, the Alliance spent \$2.25 million for visitor programming and capital improvements within the NRA on lands owned by state, federal, municipal, and private entities. In addition, the Alliance received \$5 million for environmental mitigation projects over several years, to be used on partner lands.

Table 9: National Recreation Area Annual Operating Budgets

NRA	NPS Acres	Total Acres	2009 NPS Base Budget	Staffing
Boston Harbor Islands NRA	241	1,482	\$1.2 Million	14 FTE
Mississippi NRRRA	62	53,775	\$2.1 Million	28 FTE
Chattahoochee NRA	4,891	9,886	\$3.5 Million	39 FTE
Santa Monica Mountains NRA	23,120	156,673	\$8.6 Million	99 FTE

FTE (Full-time equivalent employees). One FTE is one person working 40 hours per week for one year, or the equivalent.

CASE STUDY: COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS - SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Background

- The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), a unit of the National Park System since 1978, includes 150,000 acres of private, local, state and federal lands. The SMMNRA is managed under a unique partnership umbrella in which the federal government owns approximately 15 percent of the land.
- SMMNRA parklands and open space are managed in collaboration with city, county, and state agencies as well as organizations such as the California Native Plant Society and Mountains Restoration Trust

Cooperative Management Agreement

- A cooperative management agreement among the NPS, California State Parks, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the Mountains

Recreation and Conservation Authority allows these agencies to share funding, staff, and buildings; cooperate on programs; and jointly manage recreation areas. By signing into this voluntary agreement, these parties become official partners that work together toward SMMNRA's shared conservation and recreational goals. Cooperative management allows for greater operational efficiencies, enhanced resource protection, and improved public services.

Accomplishments

- The participating agencies under the cooperative management agreement realize greater efficiency and cost savings from shared operating procedures, cohesive law enforcement management (both resource and visitor protection), and collaborative educational programming that serves a much greater segment of the public than if agencies worked individually.

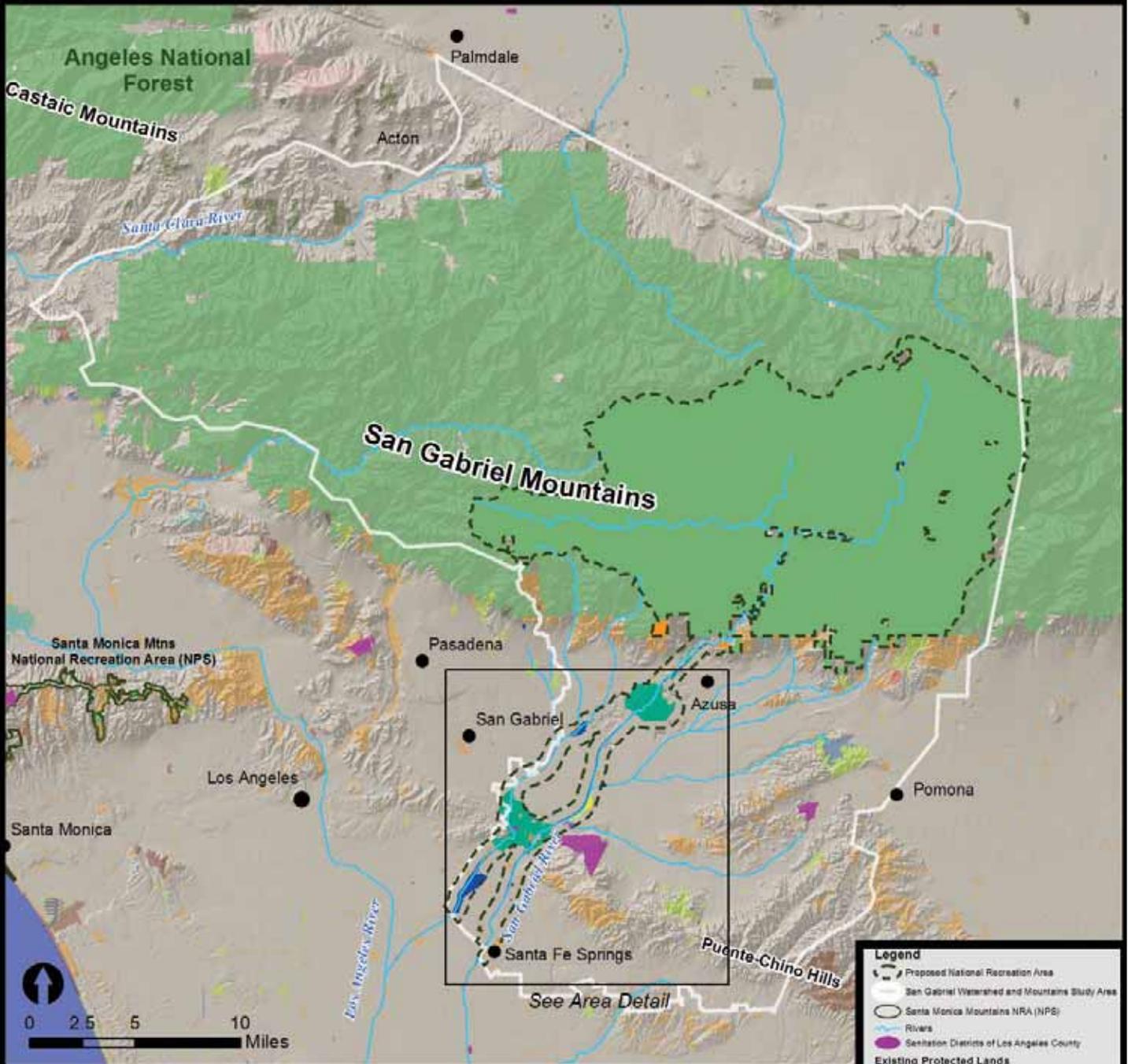
Source:
<http://www.nps.gov/samo>



Glendora Canyon Road, Angeles National Forest. NPS Photo.

Alternative C: San Gabriel Watershed National Recreation Area

San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study



Alternative C Highlights

- River-based national recreation area emphasizing new educational and interpretive opportunities in the watershed
- Enhanced access to existing public lands in the NRA
- Improved recreation opportunities for urban communities
- Interpretive and educational programs and outreach to youth
- Various public and private funding sought to achieve goals

National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office
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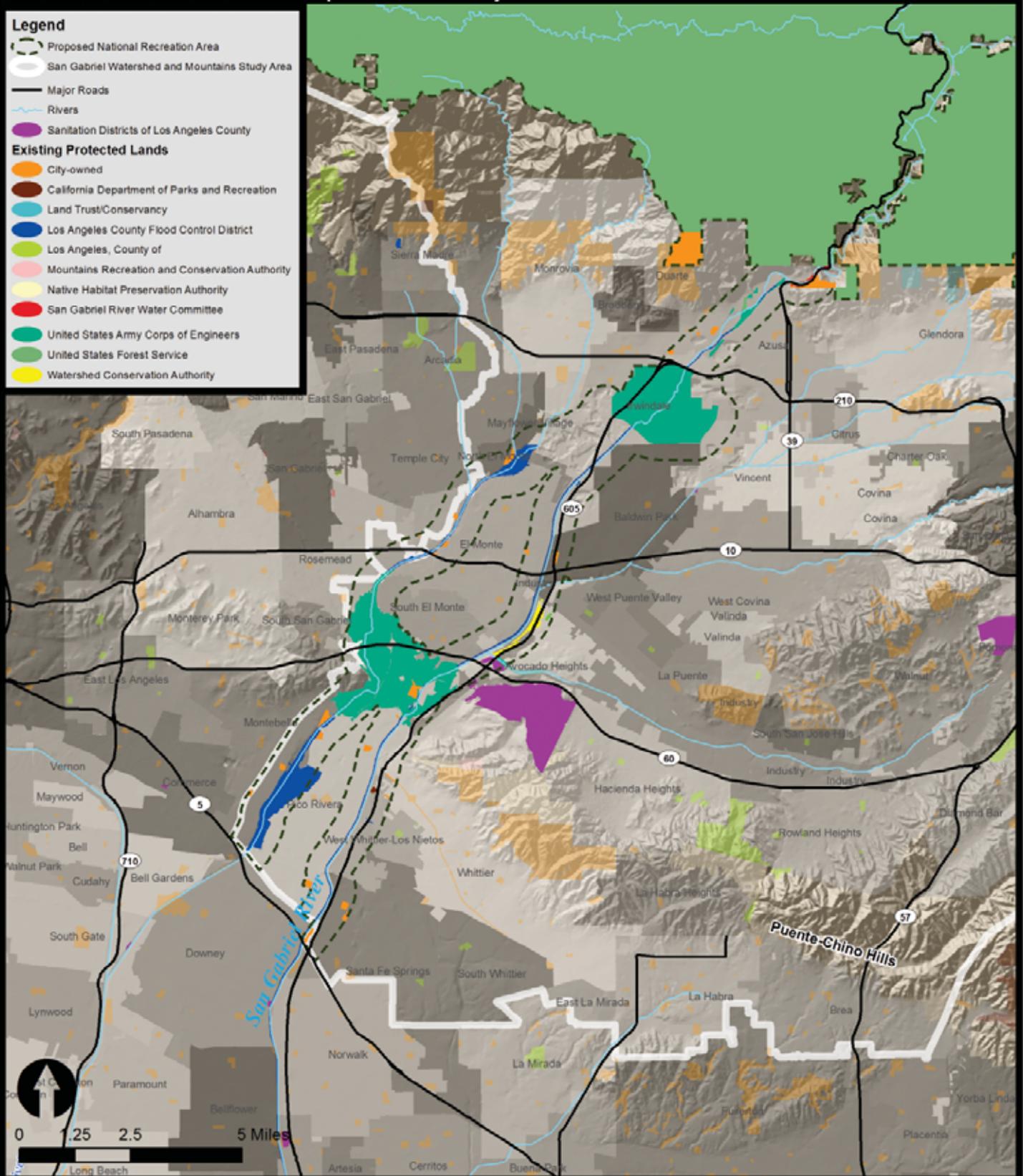
Sources: Existing Protected Lands, CPAD 1.5, ©June 2010
 GreenInfo Network - www.calands.org - Proposed Alternatives
 and Study Area (NPS), Rivers (National Hydrography Dataset, USGS)

Alternative C: San Gabriel Watershed National Recreation Area River Corridor Detail

San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study

Legend

-  Proposed National Recreation Area
-  San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Study Area
-  Major Roads
-  Rivers
-  Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
- Existing Protected Lands**
-  City-owned
-  California Department of Parks and Recreation
-  Land Trust/Conservancy
-  Los Angeles County Flood Control District
-  Los Angeles, County of
-  Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
-  Native Habitat Preservation Authority
-  San Gabriel River Water Committee
-  United States Army Corps of Engineers
-  United States Forest Service
-  Watershed Conservation Authority



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Sources: Existing Protected Lands, CPAD 1.5, ©June 2010
GreenInfo Network - www.calands.org, Proposed Alternatives and Study Area (NPS), Rivers (National Hydrography Dataset, USGS).

ALTERNATIVE D: SAN GABRIEL REGION NATIONAL RECREATION AREA (A PARTNERSHIP LINKING SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND RECREATION)

CONCEPT

Alternative D represents a combination of ideas from the preliminary alternatives that were presented to the public in fall 2009. Alternative D proposes a larger scale national recreation area (NRA) that would recognize and protect the significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente Hills, explore opportunities to protect and enhance interconnected ecosystems, provide important open space connections for recreation, and offer new educational and interpretive opportunities. Ecological restoration would be emphasized.

The management approach of alternative D would be the same as alternative C. The NPS, U.S. Forest Service, and numerous other agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area would work collaboratively to protect significant resources and improve recreational opportunities. Very little land would need to be acquired for direct management by the NPS.

Unlike the other alternatives, in alternative D the NPS and the NRA partnership would offer technical assistance to willing communities for conservation planning to extend open space connections and form a network of parks, habitats, and open spaces.

PROPOSED AREA

Alternative D proposes the largest NRA of the three action alternatives, providing more opportunities for resource protection, inter-agency coordination, and recreation. The NRA would include the San Gabriel Mountains, portions of the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers, and a portion of the western Puente Hills.

Within the San Gabriel Mountains, the NRA would include the ANF, adjacent foothill areas with ecological resource values and areas near the San Andreas Fault. Areas with ecological resource values include designated critical habitat for federally listed threatened or endangered species, and/or are within one of the Los Angeles County proposed significant ecological areas. Below the Angeles National Forest, the NRA would include a half-mile corridor around the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo rivers, south to Santa Fe Springs. Portions of the western Puente Hills with ecological resource value

and recreational potential (areas west of Harbor Boulevard) would also be included. This primarily includes lands owned and managed by the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Authority and lands proposed by Los Angeles County to be included in the Puente Hills Significant Ecological Area (See Maps: Alternative D – Linking Resources and Recreation and Alternative D – River Corridor and Puente Hills Detail).

The NRA would include approximately 581,500 acres of land, 82% of this area is already protected by existing agencies and organizations.

MANAGEMENT

NRA Partnership

The management structure and primary functions of the NRA partnership would primarily be the same as alternative C, a voluntary partnership that would include agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area. However, the functions of the partnership would be somewhat broader. The NPS and the partnership would offer additional conservation planning assistance to interested local communities in order to extend open space connections and form a network of parks, habitats and open spaces.

Because of the diversity of communities throughout the broader NRA and differing recreation and resource protection needs, the NRA partnership could have different management approaches to address the various needs. For example, in the more urban areas associated with the river corridors, the NRA partnership could work with interested surrounding communities to increase the amount and variety of public open space, parks and recreational lands, particularly in under-served areas, and to enhance public transportation access between urban populations and the public lands of the NRA.

In rural areas such as Soledad Basin, Antelope Valley or Mt. Baldy, where future growth pressures may threaten open space, and the rural quality of life, the NRA could work with communities to preserve additional open space and improve recreational trail connections and staging areas.

In existing public land areas, interagency agreements could augment agency staffing to manage highly used areas such as the San Gabriel Canyon, providing higher levels of visitor services, education, and safety.

The NRA partnership could include, but would not be limited to, the following agencies: the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the

Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Authority, the Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Parks and Recreation, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, Los Angeles County, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority. Through coordinated management agreements, NRA partners would be able to provide coordinated educational and recreational programming, and share funding, staff, and buildings. Other partnerships could also be established, such as with community-based organizations and tribal groups.

Land Management

Agencies and organizations that own and manage land within the NRA would continue to manage their lands according to their own policies and regulations.

NPS Role

As in alternative C, the NPS would take a lead role in the formal partnership that would manage or coordinate activities within the NRA. Through cooperative management agreements, the NPS could also provide educational, interpretive, law enforcement and other services to partner agencies. See case study, *Cooperative Management Agreements – Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation* for more information about cooperative management agreements. The NPS would also take a lead role in providing coordinated interpretive and educational messages about the significance of the NRA resources for existing nature centers, museum, park programs, etc. The U.S. Forest Service may require additional funding to participate in new partnership and coordination efforts.

The NPS would have no land use regulatory authority for lands that it does not own. As funding permits, the NPS would be authorized to acquire lands from willing sellers within the NRA to protect significant resources. Any land areas acquired by the NPS would likely be relatively small.

In alternative D, the NPS would offer technical assistance to interested public agencies, private landowners, and organizations to create and connect parks, conserve habitat, provide new recreational experiences, and foster a sense of regional identity. The NPS could also assist in organizing volunteer programs within the NRA.

As in alternative C, the NPS would have no land use regulatory authority for lands that it does not own. The NPS could be authorized to acquire lands within

the NRA if they became available from willing sellers for operational purposes and to protect significant resources. As most of the lands within the NRA are currently in public ownership, land acquisition by the NPS would be limited.

U.S. Forest Service Role

The Angeles National Forest role would be the same as alternative C, although the entire ANF unit within the San Gabriel Mountains would be included. The U.S. Forest Service would continue to own and manage its lands in the San Gabriel Mountains according to its policies. However, the NRA designation would reaffirm the original intent of the Angeles National Forest to protect watershed resources, provide the U.S. Forest Service with more authorities to enter into cooperative management agreements with other agencies, and to retain fees and donations. The NRA legislation would also direct the USFS to engage in partnership efforts and interagency coordination.

EXISTING AGENCIES, REGULATORY AUTHORITIES, AND LAND USE

The majority of the lands within the proposed NRA (over 80%) are already protected by various agencies and organizations. Each agency and organization would continue to protect these lands according to their own management authorities and policies.

Authorizing legislation would exempt the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County from the special use permit provisions typically required for landfills within national park boundaries to avoid impacting operations necessary for public health and safety.

With this exemption in place, alternative D would not impact the authority of any existing agencies or local governments or impact existing water rights and agreements. NPS policies would apply only to those lands acquired by the NPS. Private lands and inholdings would continue to be regulated by local land use authorities. See Actions Common to All Alternatives on page 146.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

The approach to education and interpretation would be the same as alternative C. The NPS would provide assistance for coordinated education and interpretive messages, provide on-site educational and interpretive programs, and reach out to youth through targeted programs. Such programs would be expanded beyond the watershed focus of alternative C, to cover the broader NRA of alternative D, offering more opportunities to interpret the significance of the

CASE STUDY: PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT- BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Background

Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area (BHINRA) is a national park unit established in 1996 to preserve the Boston Harbor's natural systems. Initially, the 34 Boston Harbor Islands were managed separately by a dozen federal, state, municipal, and non-profit agencies, each with its own priorities, programs, and needs. The establishment of BHINRA provided a common vision for the islands and provided a framework for cooperative management. The NPS does not own any land within BHINRA.

Management Structure

- Management of BHINRA is coordinated by the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership (Partnership). The Partnership includes 13 federal, state, city, and nonprofit agencies, the Boston Harbors Islands Advisory Council, tribes, not-for-profit organizations, colleges and universities, and businesses. The partners operate subject to their own governing laws or through formal agreements among the partner agencies. The BHIP includes a range of 13 federal, state, city, and nonprofit agencies, the Boston Harbors Islands Advisory Council, tribes, not-for-profit organizations, colleges and universities, and businesses. The partners operate subject to their own governing laws or formal agreements.

- The Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council was established by the BHINRA's enabling legislation, and advises the BHIP on the development and implementation of a general management plan for the islands, including ongoing operations.
- The Partnership agencies provide funding and staff, including volunteers for management and operation of the BHINRA. Funds are not shared across agencies, nor does the NPS receive any funds from participating agencies. The Island Alliance is charged by the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership with generating private revenue to support the park.
- The BHINRA also relies on private- and public-sector investments since the authorizing legislation limits federal spending to ¼ of the operating budget. The Island Alliance is a non-profit organization charged by the Partnership with generating private revenue to support the BHINRA.

Accomplishments

- The BHINRA benefits from more resources and coordinated research and resource management, leading to greater conservation efforts.
- By branding BHINRA's identity throughout Boston and using media to make visitors aware of recreational opportunities, the islands have become a much loved and popular destination.

Source:

www.nps.gov/boha, <http://www.bostonislands.com>

San Gabriel Mountains. Interpretation could also be expanded to include natural and cultural resources of the Puente Hills. See case study, *Coordinated Interpretation – Rosie the Riveter/World War II National Historical Park*.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS

Within the NRA, a variety of recreational opportunities would be available to the public. Recreational uses and activities would be determined by the existing land management agency (e.g. the U.S. Forest Service would continue to determine what recreational activities are appropriate according to its own agency policies). In alternative D, the NRA partnership would seek to improve recreational access and opportunities in urban areas that are deficient in recreation and park lands by offering assistance in planning for close-to-home recreational opportunities, better trail access, and improved public transportation options to recreational areas. Additionally, the partnership would explore opportunities to restore vacant or unused land to provide new recreational opportunities. See next page for case study *Lashbrook Park, Multiple-Use Benefits along the San Gabriel River*.

The NRA partnership would also seek ways to improve the recreational experience in more heavily impacted areas such as the San Gabriel Canyon by providing more education, improving facilities, improving maintenance and law enforcement, and enhancing visitor management to reduce impacts. Improved recreational experiences in more rural areas such as the Antelope Valley could focus on protecting the rural recreational experience by providing better trail connections and improved equestrian staging areas.

Similar to alternative C, the voluntary information network would identify parks and sites with recreational and learning opportunities. However, in alternative D, this network would be more expansive, including sites with recreational and learning opportunities associated with the San Gabriel River Watershed, the Puente Hills, and the San Gabriel Mountains. At each site, visitors would find maps and guides linking one site with others pertaining to the same or related themes.

RESOURCE PROTECTION (ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES)

Alternative D would emphasize protecting significant resources associated with the San Gabriel

Mountains and Puente Hills. The NRA partnership would explore opportunities to preserve and restore open space and to protect and enhance wildlife corridors within the NRA.

As in alternative C, primary responsibility for resource protection would remain with existing agencies and landowners. The NRA partnership would facilitate opportunities to work in collaboration with partner t agencies and organizations to conserve and enhance resources through research, cooperative management, and restoration. Ecological communities could be enhanced by additional scientific knowledge, expertise, technical assistance, and cooperative management.

Alternative D emphasizes protecting ecosystems and wildlife corridors. For example, the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente-Chino Hills are refuges for rare and endangered species. These species need to be able to move to and from these open space areas, particularly in the case of wildfire events and for adaptation associated with climate and habitat change. Better ecosystem connectivity also fosters greater biodiversity. The NRA partnership would seek to leverage additional funding for ecological restoration and wildlife and habitat management and conservation efforts.

Coordinated cultural resource management would be the same as in alternative C, but would cover a broader area with the larger NRA. Cultural resources within the study area would benefit from further study, documentation, and protection. Such efforts would improve the ability of the NRA to develop interpretive materials and programming related to cultural resources.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Existing agencies would continue to be responsible for the operation and maintenance of their lands and facilities.

Staffing

Similar to alternative C, the NPS would manage the national recreation area in partnership with other agencies. Given NPS budget constraints, it is likely that the NRA would inwould initially have a small staff that would increase over time as funding is available, and following the completion of a general management plan which would identify park priorities, management emphases, and required staffing for a 15-20 year timeframe.

Because alternative D incorporates a larger land area and broader set of programs than alternative C, it would be expected to require slightly higher

CASE STUDY: COORDINATED INTERPRETATION ROSIE THE RIVETER/ WORLD WAR II NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Background

Rosie the Riveter/ World War II National Historical Park was established in 2000 to commemorate the sacrifices and accomplishments of the City of Richmond and the people's contributions to the World War II Home Front effort. Located in Richmond, California, the park tells the story of the home front effort during World War II.

Partnership Management

- Park sites include an historic shipyard, the SS Red Oak Victory, the Rosie the Riveter Memorial, several historic structures, trails, and parks along Richmond's waterfront, and reflects one of the most intact histories of the World War II Home Front.
- The NPS does not own any of the sites in the historical park. Most of the sites are owned by the City of Richmond.
- NPS operates the park through partnerships with a range of local and regional groups, the City of Richmond, and different nonprofit and private organizations.

Coordinated Interpretation

- The NPS provides visitors with opportunities to learn and experience the home front stories that are preserved and interpreted.
- The roles of the NPS are mainly to develop interpretive exhibits, orient visitors to the national historical park, develop and coordinate visitor programs, provide technical assistance to the sites and partners, and collect and preserve the WWII home front artifacts and histories.

Accomplishments

- The NPS has brought national focus and attention to the World War II-era resources of Richmond and has helped to leverage grants and endowments to other cooperating partners.
- The NPS also provides technical assistance in preserving historic resources and telling the American home front stories.

Source:

<http://www.nps.gov/samo>

staffing levels. For example, additional rangers and resource specialists would be required. Based on comparisons of staffing levels for existing partnership parks of similar size and with small NPS landownership, the following types of staff might be recommended for alternative D:

- Partnership Specialist
- Superintendent
- Administrative Assistant
- Visitor Use Assistant
- Interpretive Park Rangers
- Law Enforcement Park Rangers
- Teacher Ranger
- GIS Technician
- Volunteer/Outreach Program Coordinator
- Education Program Specialist
- Cultural Resource Specialist
- Outdoor Recreation Planner/Community Planner
- Wildlife Ecologist
- Biological Technician

In early years of park establishment, the NRA could possibly share positions with the Los Angeles-based Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). Staffing recommendations would be refined through completion of a general management plan which would identify management priorities for the NRA for a 15-20 year timeframe. The ability of the NPS to fulfill such positions would be dependent on NPS and partner funding.

The NRA partnership would also provide the opportunity for agencies to share staff, facilities, and funding to assist in the operations and maintenance of heavily used visitor areas. Through cooperative management agreements the NPS could share staff with other land management agencies. For example, the NPS could provide rangers to supplement U.S. Forest Service staff in high use areas of the Angeles National Forest. The NRA partnership could also leverage funding and resources to improve existing facilities or provide new facilities where necessary.

The NPS would coordinate new partnerships and facilitate the development of more volunteer programs to assist in the maintenance of facilities, preservation/restoration efforts, and interpretation of significant resources. Additionally, the NPS would provide opportunities for job training and conservation stewardship programs for youth and nearby community members. See case study: *Minority Youth Education and Employment Program: Santa Monica Mountains NRA*.

LAND ACQUISITION

Lands within the NRA would remain under their current jurisdictions, with each land management

agency continuing to fund its own operations. Approximately 82% of the land in the proposed NRA is already protected for recreation and conservation by partner agencies (479,000 of approximately 581,500 acres). Much of the remaining 100,000 acres are comprised of urbanized lands in commercial and residential use that would not be appropriate or feasible for NPS land acquisition. However, the alternative D NRA would include more unprotected lands with significant resources than alternative C. The NRA partnership would be eligible to request NPS funding for land acquisition within the NRA for acquisition of small areas with resource significance such as a historic site or open space with native habitat. However, partner agencies would also be expected to contribute funding to land acquisition within the NRA. NPS land acquisition funding is extremely limited.

OPERATIONAL AND VISITOR FACILITIES

Construction of new administrative facilities for NPS operations and management would not likely be required to support the proposed NRA. Given the existing amount of office space available in and near the proposed NRA, it is likely that the NPS could share administrative and operational facilities with partner agencies or lease other office space available in the area. There may also be opportunities to adaptively reuse an historic building or property if the NPS acquired land that contained such facilities. The NPS could also use partner facilities or adaptively reuse buildings to provide visitor facilities. The Angeles National Forest and various local and state park and recreation agencies also operate and manage existing visitor facilities within the proposed NRA. If established, the NRA partnership would identify specific operational and visitor facilities needs through a general management plan.

FUNDING AND COSTS

Lands within the NRA under alternative D would remain within their current jurisdictions, with each existing land management agency continuing to fund its own operations.

As with each action alternative, legislation establishing a special designation on the Angeles National Forest may enhance funding or fundraising opportunities for the U.S. Forest Service to achieve resource restoration and protection goals, as well as provide improved recreation, interpretation, and educational facilities and programs.

The NPS would also require additional federal funding for its administrative, educational, technical

assistance, and interpretive roles. In addition, the NRA partnership could establish a fundraising organization, be a coordinating body for existing grant programs, and work together to leverage funds from a variety of sources (e.g. state bonds, Land & Water Conservation Fund) to increase and prioritize funding for projects and staff in the NRA and San Gabriel Watershed.

The NRA partnership under alternative D would operate much the same as the partnership under alternative C, with the NPS and the partnership seeking funding from similar sources. Two key differences between the alternatives are the size of the NRA managed by the partnership and the scope of technical assistance by the NPS outside of the NRA. A larger NRA would require more from the NPS in terms of its administrative, educational, and interpretive assistance to the partnership. In addition, alternative D provides technical assistance from the NPS to communities, organizations, and landowners outside of the NRA for the purposes of enhancing recreational access and protecting resources. Based on the larger size of the area, and the additional types of services and assistance offered through the partnership, the cost of NPS operations for the NRA could be expected to be toward the middle end of the scale of comparable park budgets provided in Table 10. The estimated annual operating budget for the NPS could range from between \$2 to \$4 million. As with alternative C, the partnership would also benefit from private fundraising. Funds raised through the types of groups described under alternative C could be used to supplement the operating budgets of the partners.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

Planning and implementation projects are not reflected in the operational budgets described in Table 10. With an NPS designation, the NRA would be eligible to receive funding for planning and projects through the NPS. For example, soon after establishment of the NRA, the NPS could provide initial planning funds for a general management plan which would define management priorities,

more specific actions, and funding needs for the NRA. The general management plan would be completed in collaboration with the partnership agencies. A general management for a partnership park the size and scale of which is proposed in alternative D would likely take 4 to 5 years to complete and could cost between \$500,000 and \$700,000. Additional NPS funding may also be available for specific projects such as trail development, interpretive signage, and materials. A general management plan would identify more specific implementation needs.

CASE STUDY: MINORITY YOUTH EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM: SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NRA

Background

Santa Monica Mountains NRA is adjacent to one of the largest urban areas in the United States. However, many youth, especially minorities, lack knowledge about national parks and employment opportunities with the National Park Service (NPS) or other conservation agencies. Employing minority youth within the environmental field adds to a broadening diversity of perspectives in NPS operation and management decisions.

Accomplishments

The National Park Service provides high school students with summer jobs working as a team outdoors. In return, the employment program provides the NPS with bright, capable students who already have an interest and educational background in diverse aspects of park management.

The program allows students to meaningfully contribute to the national recreation area's mission. A benefit of this is that it encourages students to pursue long-term careers in the National Park Service, or in the natural and environmental fields.

Sources:

http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/minrty_yth_santa_monica.htm, www.nps.gov/samo

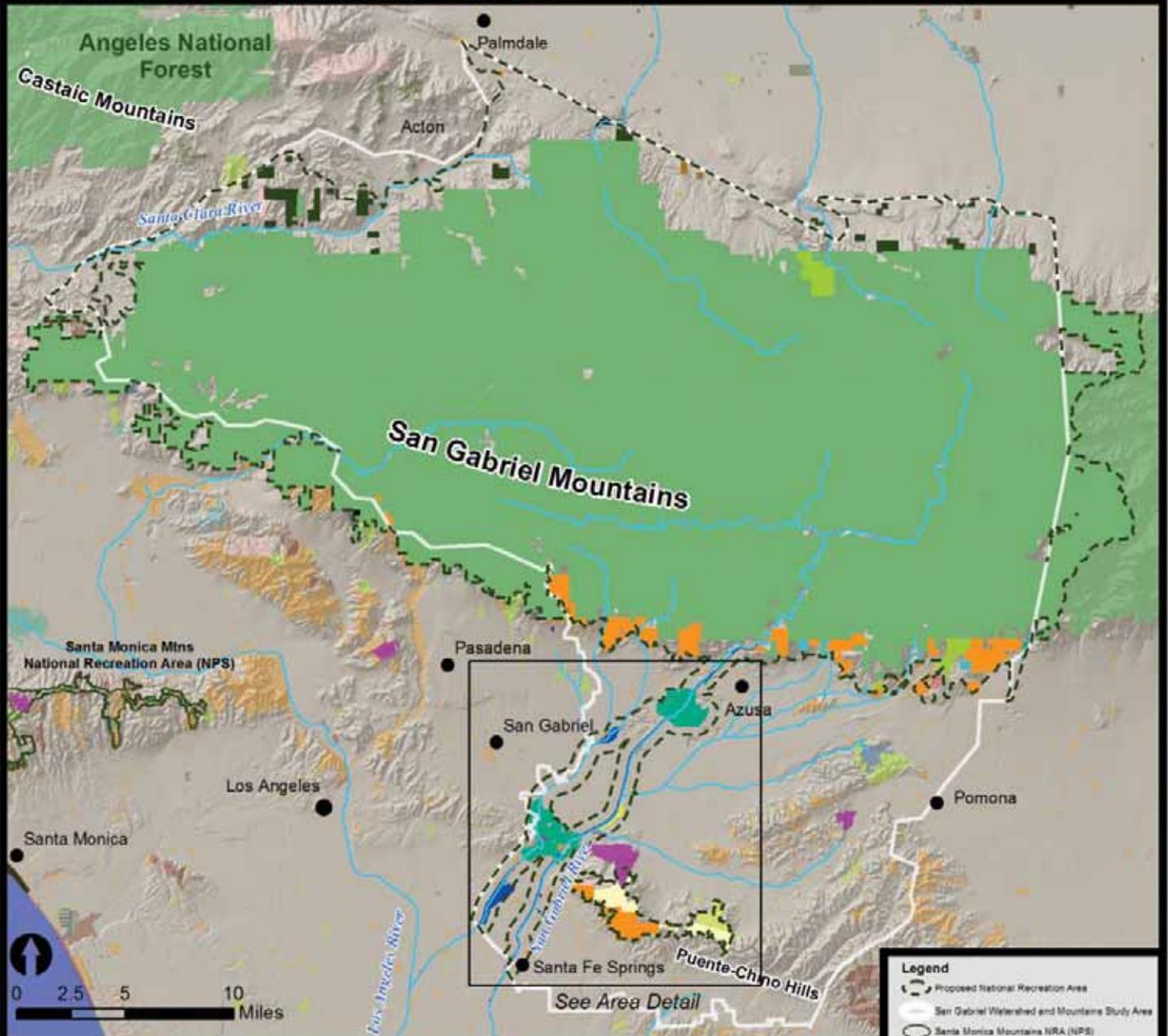
Table 10: National Recreation Area Annual Operating Budgets

NRA	NPS Acres	Total Acres	2009 NPS Base Budget	Staffing
Boston Harbor Islands NRA	241	1,482	\$1.2 Million	14 FTE
Mississippi NRRRA	62	53,775	\$2.1 Million	28 FTE
Chattahoochee NRA	4,891	9,886	\$3.5 Million	39 FTE
Santa Monica Mountains NRA	23,120	156,673	\$8.6 Million	99 FTE

FTE (Full-time equivalent employees). One FTE is one person working 40 hours per week for one year, or the equivalent.

Alternative D: San Gabriel Region National Recreation Area: A Partnership Linking Significant Resources and Recreation

San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study



Alternative D Highlights

- A larger NRA focused on conservation of significant resources, recreation and education
- Enhanced access to existing public lands
- New recreation opportunities for urban communities
- Protection of significant resources
- Interpretive and educational programs and outreach to youth
- Technical assistance program to form a network of parks, habitats, and open spaces.
- Various public and private funding sought to achieve goals



National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office
Updated August 2011
The NPS makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the accuracy or content of this map.

Sources: Existing Protected Lands, CPAD 1.5, ©June 2010
GreenInfo Network - www.calands.org, Proposed Alternatives
and Study Area (NPS), Rivers (National Hydrography Dataset, USGS)

Table 11: Summary of Alternatives

Component	No Action	Alternative A
Concept	<p>Current programs and policies of existing federal, state, county and non-profit conservation organizations would remain in place and current conditions and trends would continue.</p> <p>No new unit of the national park system would be established.</p>	<p>Congress would designate the San Gabriel Mountains unit of the Angeles National Forest (ANF) a U.S. Forest Service National Recreation Area (NRA) that would continue to be managed solely by the U.S. Forest Service. The designation would bring additional recognition, tools, and resources to the ANF in order to steward watershed resources and ecosystems, and improve recreational opportunities.</p> <p>The NRA designation would reaffirm the primary importance of the ANF in preserving watershed resources and emphasize future management practices that are compatible with resource protection. Authorizing legislation would also recognize the importance of the NRA for its recreational value and establish mechanisms to increase funding for facilities, maintenance, visitor management, and programming.</p> <p>No unit of the national park system would be established.</p>
Proposed Area	N/A	The NRA would encompass the existing ANF boundary within the San Gabriel Mountains.
Management structure	<p>Existing federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private property owners would continue to own and manage lands and resources within the study area.</p> <p>Existing coordination and collaboration between existing agencies and organizations for resource protection and recreational opportunities would continue.</p>	<p>The ANF would continue to manage the NRA according to existing policies.</p> <p>The legislation establishing the NRA would provide the ANF with new authorities that would allow the U.S. Forest Service to partner with organizations to provide additional resources for recreation, resource protection, maintenance, and safety.</p>
NPS role	<p>There would be no new NPS role.</p> <p>Existing units of the NPS would continue current management.</p> <p>The NPS would continue to provide technical and financial assistance through existing programs.</p>	<p>No unit of the national park system would be established.</p> <p>Existing units of the NPS would continue current management. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area would continue to partner with the U.S. Forest Service, as it currently does, on an informal basis.</p> <p>The NPS would continue to provide technical and financial assistance through existing programs.</p>

Alternative C	Alternative D
<p>Alternative C proposes a river-based national recreation area that would raise the visibility of the San Gabriel River Watershed, offer new educational and interpretive opportunities along the river and throughout the watershed, and improve river-based recreational opportunities.</p> <p>The NRA would be established by an act of Congress, which would provide the U.S. Forest Service, the NPS, and other land management agencies and organizations with guidance and direction to work together in new ways.</p> <p>This would be a new model for a national park unit. Very little land would be acquired for direct management by the NPS. Instead, partnership arrangements among federal and state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and area landowners would achieve the conservation, recreational, and educational goals of the NRA.</p>	<p>The hallmark of alternative D is a national recreation area (NRA) that would recognize the significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente Hills, explore opportunities to protect and enhance interconnected ecosystems, provide important open space connections for recreation, and offer new educational and interpretive opportunities.</p> <p>The management approach of alternative D would be the same as alternative C- a new model of national park management where the NPS, USFS, and numerous other agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area would work collaboratively. Very little land would be acquired for direct management by the NPS.</p> <p>Alternative D would also offer technical assistance programs for conservation planning in coordination with willing communities to extend open space connections and form a network of parks, habitats, and open spaces.</p>
<p>The NRA would encompass the upper San Gabriel River Watershed within the ANF, portions of the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo river corridors in the San Gabriel Valley, and associated trails and access points, and adjacent public lands.</p>	<p>The NRA would encompass the ANF boundary within the San Gabriel Mountains, portions of the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo River corridors, and portions of the western Puente Hills. This larger NRA would include both urban areas, rural undeveloped areas, and large areas of protected open space.</p>
<p>The NRA would be managed by a voluntary partnership that would include agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area.</p> <p>In existing public land areas, interagency agreements could augment agency staffing to manage highly used areas such as the San Gabriel Canyon, providing higher levels of visitor services, education, and safety.</p> <p>The NRA would partner with existing environmental education centers, school districts, visitor centers, and youth organizations to provide ranger programs and opportunities to engage children and residents of all ages in learning about environmental stewardship and the natural and cultural significance of the San Gabriel River Watershed.</p>	<p>The management structure would primarily be the same as alternative C, with broader functions. The NPS and the partnership would offer conservation planning assistance to interested communities to extend open space connections and form a network of parks, habitats, and open spaces.</p> <p>In the more urban areas associated with the river corridors, the NRA partnership would work with interested surrounding communities to increase the amount and variety of public open space, parks and recreational lands, particularly in under-served areas, and to enhance public transportation access between urban populations and the public lands of the NRA.</p> <p>In rural areas such as Soledad Basin, Antelope Valley or Mt. Baldy, where future growth pressures may threaten open space and rural quality of life, the NRA would work with communities to preserve additional open space and improve recreational trail connections and staging areas.</p> <p>In existing public land areas, interagency agreements could augment agency staffing to manage highly used areas such as the San Gabriel Canyon, providing higher levels of visitor services, education, and safety.</p>
<p>The primary role of the NPS would be: 1) coordinating the formal partnership that would manage activities within the NRA and 2) providing interpretation and education.</p> <p>The NPS would take the lead in coordinating a voluntary information network throughout the San Gabriel Watershed to provide interpretative and educational messages about significant resources.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C, plus:</p> <p>The NPS would offer conservation planning assistance to interested public agencies, private landowners, and organizations to create and connect parks, conserve habitat, and provide new recreational experiences.</p>

Component	No Action	Alternative A
Existing Agencies and Authorities	Existing federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private property owners would continue to own and manage lands and resources within the study area.	The designation would only apply to lands currently owned and operated by the U.S. Forest Service. Private lands and inholdings would continue to be regulated by local land use authorities.
Education and Interpretation	Current interpretive programs at existing parks, open spaces, and cultural sites would continue. Coordinated interpretation about the San Gabriel Mountains and Watershed would be limited.	The ANF would be recognized for its nationally significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains. New partnership efforts and additional funding for education and interpretation staff would allow for interpretive media and programs within the ANF. The NRA could explore new opportunities for education and research associated with the San Dimas Experimental Forest.
Recreational Opportunities and Access	Existing agencies and organizations would continue to provide recreational opportunities for the public. Recreational access would continue to be limited for some portions of the study area. Transportation options would continue to be limited.	Increased attention and a narrower management focus resulting from the designation may encourage additional or reprioritized federal funding for improved recreational experiences in the San Gabriel Mountains. New partnership opportunities may assist the ANF in fundraising for improved recreational experiences and planning for recreational connections (e.g. trails, bicycle paths).
Resource Protection	Resource protection would continue to be managed by existing federal, state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private property owners. Coordination among agencies to protect wildlife corridors and habitat would occur on a case-by-case basis. Examples include the Integrated Water Resources Management Plan, the Emerald Necklace, and the San Gabriel River Master Plan.	The ANF would continue balancing use and resource protection in accordance with its multiple-use policy. The legislation establishing the NRA could direct that any proposed new uses would need to be compatible with the original legislative intent to protect watershed resources. The NRA would bring additional recognition, tools and resources to the ANF in order to steward significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains. For example, to protect habitats and ecosystems, the U.S. Forest Service could enter into cooperative management agreements with other agencies to protect habitat that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Ecological restoration would be emphasized. New resources would be allocated to document, protect, and interpret cultural resources in the San Gabriel Mountains.

Alternative C	Alternative D
<p>The designation of the NRA would not apply additional regulatory or land use authorities over existing agencies or local governments. Each partner and jurisdiction would retain landownership, management, and decision-making authorities for lands that they own.</p> <p>NPS land management policies and regulations would only apply to lands that the NPS acquires.</p> <p>Private lands would continue to be regulated by local land use authorities.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>
<p>The NRA would partner with existing environmental education centers, school districts, visitor centers, and youth organizations to provide ranger programs and opportunities to engage children and residents of all ages in learning about environmental stewardship and the natural and cultural significance of the San Gabriel River Watershed.</p> <p>Through cooperative management agreements, the NPS could provide interpretive programs at existing recreation areas, schools, interpretive centers, and historical sites/areas within the NRA.</p> <p>The NRA partnership would coordinate a voluntary, shared information network in which sites within the San Gabriel Watershed would deliver coordinated interpretive messages about the watershed.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative C. However, with a larger NRA in alternative D, a wider array of interpretive topics and themes, and on-site interpretive and educational programming would occur throughout the San Gabriel Mountains, along the San Gabriel River, and in the Puente-Chino Hills.</p>
<p>Recreational uses and activities would be determined by the existing land management agency (e.g. the U.S. Forest Service would continue to determine what recreational activities are appropriate according to its own agency policies).</p> <p>The NRA partners would work together to improve and enhance the quality of existing recreational experiences through facility improvement, additional staff (rangers and interpreters), monitoring efforts, and cooperative planning.</p> <p>Within the NRA, the partnership would work to foster new recreational opportunities that are compatible with maintaining watershed values, water supply, flood protection, and habitat values.</p> <p>Better transportation/connections to destinations within the NRA, such as the ANF, would be explored.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative C, plus:</p> <p>The NRA partnership would offer technical assistance in planning for close-to-home recreational opportunities, better trail access, and improved public transportation options to recreational areas.</p>
<p>The NRA partnership would seek additional funding for resource protection and facilitate opportunities to work collaboratively to conserve and enhance resources along the San Gabriel River and its upper watershed through research, cooperative management, and ecological restoration.</p> <p>New resources would be allocated to document, protect, and interpret cultural resources within the NRA.</p>	<p>The NRA partnership would facilitate opportunities to work collaboratively to conserve and enhance significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains, Watershed, and Puente Hills through research, cooperative management, and ecological restoration.</p> <p>The NRA partnership would seek to leverage additional funding for wildlife and habitat management and offer conservation technical assistance when requested.</p> <p>Coordinated cultural resource management would be the same as in alternative C, but would cover a broader area with the larger NRA.</p>

Component	No Action	Alternative A
Operations and Maintenance	Funding and staffing for operations and maintenance would remain at current levels.	<p>Authorizing legislation would direct additional funding for the operation and maintenance of the NRA.</p> <p>The NRA would coordinate new partnerships and develop more volunteer programs to assist in the maintenance of facilities, preservation/restoration efforts, and interpretation of significant resources.</p>
Costs and Funding	No new federal capital or operating costs other than through existing authorities.	<p>In order to accomplish the goals of the NRA, substantial additional funding would be required, either through appropriations, partnerships, or philanthropy.</p> <p>Legislation could allow the forest to receive direct donations and provide a mechanism for establishing a nonprofit fundraising or "friends" group. The elevated visibility and attention of a new designation, coupled with an increased sense of identity for those living in the region, would enhance the ability of the ANF to more successfully raise private funds and seek special appropriations for particular projects.</p>

Alternative C	Alternative D
<p>Lands within the NRA would remain under their current ownership and jurisdictions, with each land management agency continuing to fund its own operations.</p> <p>The need for land acquisition by the NPS would be small, targeted for protection of significant resources, and subject to available funding. Partner agencies would also contribute funds for land acquisition within the NRA.</p> <p>The NPS would share office space with partner agencies or lease office space in or near the NRA for operations and administration. The NPS could also seek use of existing buildings for visitor serving facilities.</p> <p>The NPS would require funding for staff including administration, interpreters, planners, law enforcement, outreach coordinator, education specialists, and resource management specialists.</p> <p>Through cooperative management agreements, the NRA would provide the opportunity for agencies to share staff, facilities, and funding to assist in the operations and maintenance of heavily used visitor areas.</p> <p>The NRA would coordinate new partnerships and develop more volunteer programs to assist in the maintenance of facilities, preservation/restoration efforts, and interpretation of significant resources.</p> <p>Job training programs could be made available for youth.</p>	<p>Lands within the NRA would remain under their current ownership and jurisdictions, with each land management agency continuing to fund its own operations.</p> <p>The need for NPS land acquisition would be small, targeted for protection of significant resources, and subject to funding availability. Partner agencies would also contribute funds for land acquisition within the NRA.</p> <p>The NPS would share office space with partner agencies or lease space in or near the NRA for operations and administration. The NPS could also seek use of existing buildings for visitor serving facilities.</p> <p>Required NPS staff for the NRA would be similar to alternative C. However, with a larger land area and a broader set of programs, alternative D would be expected to require slightly higher staffing levels.</p> <p>Through cooperative management agreements, the NRA would provide the opportunity for agencies to share staff, facilities, and funding to assist in the operations and maintenance of heavily used visitor areas.</p> <p>The NRA would coordinate new partnerships and develop more volunteer programs to assist in the maintenance of facilities, preservation/restoration efforts, and interpretation of significant resources.</p> <p>Job training programs could be made available for youth.</p>
<p>Legislation creating a special designation on the ANF may enhance funding or fundraising opportunities for the U.S. Forest Service.</p> <p>The NPS would require federal funding for its administrative, educational, technical assistance, and interpretive roles.</p> <p>The NRA partnership could be a coordinating body for existing grant programs, and work together to leverage funds from a variety of sources (e.g. state bonds, Land & Water Conservation Fund) to increase and prioritize funding for projects in the NRA and San Gabriel Watershed.</p> <p>Based on comparisons with existing partnership parks of similar size and function, alternative C could require an annual NPS operating budget of approximately \$1-3 million.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C. However, a larger NRA would require more from the NPS in terms of its administrative, educational, and interpretive assistance to the partnership. In addition, alternative D provides conservation planning assistance from the NPS to communities, organizations, and landowners outside of the NRA. For these two reasons, the annual NPS operating budget for the NRA is estimated to be approximately \$2-4 million.</p>

