



National Park Service Roles in Urban Areas — Case Studies

THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM AND ITS PROGRAMS

National parks are often thought of as large and mostly natural parks like Yosemite and Yellowstone. However, the national park system includes many types of sites including national monuments, national historic sites, national preserves and reserves, and wild and scenic rivers. Many are smaller parks located in urban areas, which rely on partnerships and may have little, if any, federal landownership. The National Park Service (NPS) often refers to all of these sites as “parks,” “national parks,” or “units of the national park system,” regardless of their official title.

The NPS also administers several grant and technical assistance programs. These programs assist states and local communities in preserving historic buildings, providing parks and recreational opportunities, and protecting important natural resources and open space. Often these programs involve working in partnership with agencies, local governments, and other organizations.

NATIONAL PARKS IN URBAN AREAS

The National Park Service and the parks it manages have evolved over time. In the early years, NPS management primarily focused on large natural and scenic areas, managed for resource protection, and smaller historic sites, including battlefields, forts, historic homes, and memorials. In the 1970s, the NPS and other federal agencies began to focus on urban recreation needs, resulting in the establishment of innovative types of national parks, including urban national recreation areas.

Today, there are 69 national parks in urban areas. About half of these parks are national historic sites and historical parks and one-third are memorials and monuments. Fifty urban national parks are less than 100 acres in size. While the median size of a non-urban national park is 230,000 acres, the median size of an urban national park is 35 acres.

Recently-established parks are likely to be urban, small, managed through partnerships, with minimal federal landownership. Of the 20 parks established in the last 10 years, 9 are within urban areas, and 97% of the land is in nonfederal ownership.

Why urban national parks? Parks established in urban areas provide residents with opportunities for recreation, including adequate access, solitude, education, and an improved quality of life. National recognition can help to bring in additional funding and assistance to communities seeking help with recreation and open space needs. In addition, parks preserve structures of historical importance, protect sensitive habitats, and interpret their significance as it relates to the area.

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National Park Units and Related Areas

National parks contain a variety of resources and encompass large land or water areas to help provide adequate protection of resources.

California examples: Yosemite, Sequoia, Death Valley

National preserves and reserves are like national parks but may allow for uses such as hunting, trapping, oil/gas exploration and extraction.

California examples: Mojave

National monuments are usually smaller than parks and preserve at least one nationally significant resource. California examples: Cabrillo, Devils Postpile, Lava Beds

National historic sites / parks preserve places and commemorate persons, events, and activities important in the nation's history.

California examples: John Muir, Fort Point, Manzanar

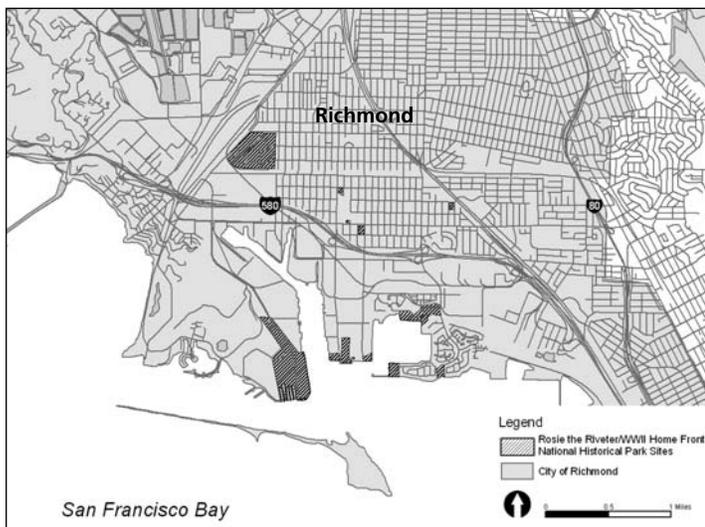
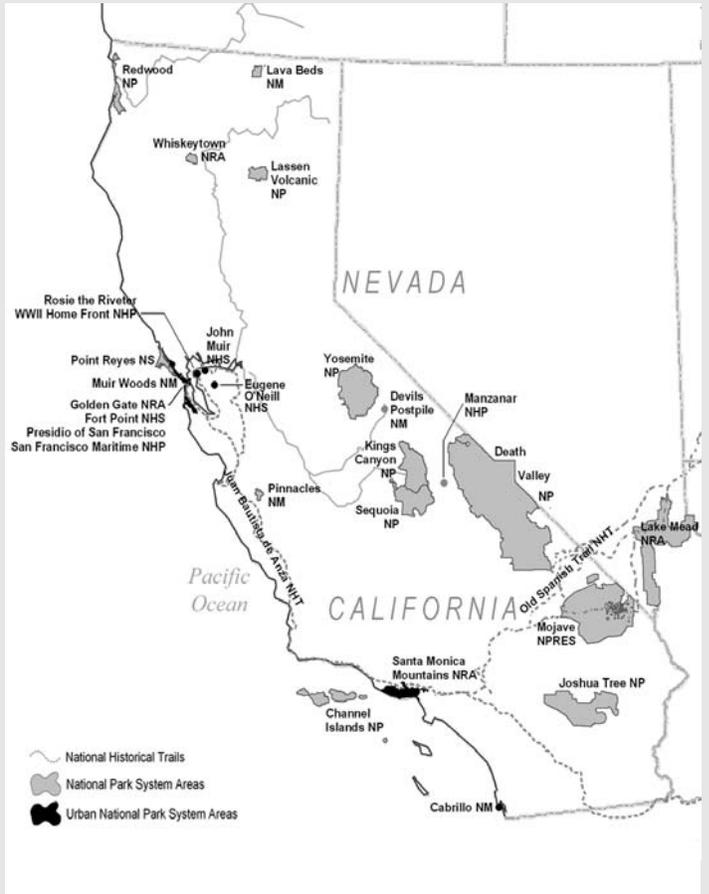
National recreation areas encompass land and water set aside for recreational use and include major areas in urban centers. *California examples: Santa Monica Mountains, Golden Gate. There are also national recreation areas administered by the U.S. Forest Service.*

National trails system includes scenic, historic and recreation trails. National Historic Trails recognize routes of exploration, migration and military action. National Scenic Trails are continuous, extended routes of outdoor recreation within protected corridors. *California examples: National Historic Trails: Juan Bautista de Anza, Old Spanish Trail. National Scenic Trail: Pacific Crest Trail, managed by USFS*

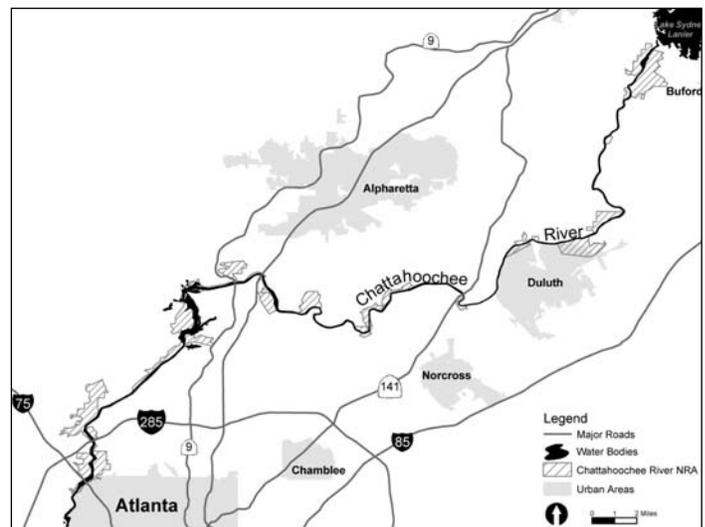
National rivers and wild and scenic riverways preserve rivers in their natural state and provide recreation opportunities. *California examples: 14 rivers including Kern River and Sespe Creek*

For other types of designations see www.nps.gov/legacy/nomenclature.html

Examples of National Park Units in California



Rosie the Riveter / World War II Home Front National Historical Park map (case study next page)



Chattahoochee National Recreation Area map (case study next page)

National Park Units in Urban Areas

The following case studies describe urban national parks in which the NPS works in partnership with many organizations to preserve nationally significant resources and provide opportunities for public enjoyment.

Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, California

The World War II Home Front is a significant chapter in America's history. Fully engaged in winning World War II, women, minorities, and men worked toward a common goal in a manner that has been unequalled since. Women affectionately known as "Rosies" helped change industry and had sweeping and lasting impacts. Richmond, California played a nationally recognized part in the Home Front.



- Established in 2000 to tell the story of America's Home Front during World War II.
- 145 acres, mostly owned by city of Richmond; currently no NPS ownership; Congress specified that NPS could acquire and maintain a small portion of the park sites.
- The park includes: a collection of historic buildings constructed during World War II; a sculpture memorial depicting Richmond's shipbuilding effort by women, men, and minorities; a shoreline trail; and other sites.
- The park's visitor center will be located in the historic Ford Assembly Plant building (where jeeps and tanks were assembled during the war) which is being rehabilitated for adaptive reuse by the city and a private developer.
- NPS works with partners to preserve the stories and sites associated with the Home Front, including interpretation of historic resources and collection of oral histories.
- Recreation opportunities through San Francisco Bay Trail sections, city parks, and historic buildings attract visitors to the city.
- The park provides a positive image for the city which has been faced with economic hardship. The city receives national recognition for accomplishments made during World War II. Development of the park has brought grant funding and investors to the city.

See www.nps.gov/rori for more information.

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Atlanta, Georgia

"It's one of the most beautiful places in our country, extremely valuable to all those who know it, who live near it, and who appreciate the quiet and seclusion and the beauty and the value of this river.... It's a rare occasion when within the city limits of one of our major cities, one can find pure water and trout and free canoeing and rapids and the seclusion of the Earth the way God made it. But the Chattahoochee River is this kind of place."

- President Jimmy Carter, August 15, 1978



- Established in 1978 to preserve and protect the natural, scenic, recreational, and historical values of the Chattahoochee River Valley.
- The park's more than 9,200 acres is about half in federal ownership and half in state and private ownership.
- The park, extending from Atlanta north to Lake Lanier, consists of public park units linked by a 48-mile river corridor, and contains approximately three-fourths of all public green space in the 10-county area of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia.
- The 1999 legislation that expanded the park to link the separate units also limited land acquisition to donation or purchase from willing sellers. The park works in partnership with the State, local governments, and private entities to manage the area and to prevent encroaching development and loss of open space.
- The park provides important outdoor recreation resources to several million residents of the Atlanta metropolitan area, and receives about 2.7 million visitors a year.
- The park's green space and the river provide opportunities for hiking, nature viewing, paddling, boating, fishing, and natural solitude and seclusion within a relatively undisturbed environment.
- The park protects an area that has escaped ecological changes occurring elsewhere and so provides suitable habitat for protected plant and animal species.

See www.nps.gov/chat for more information.

National Park Service Partnership Programs

The National Park Service participates in creative partnership programs established by Congress to assist local communities in protecting special places and promoting opportunities for visitor enjoyment.

Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network

For centuries, the bay has served as a source of wonder and inspiration. Its beauty stirs the human spirit. Its resources drive the economies of nearby towns and cities. Its shores are dotted with cultural and historical treasures that speak to the founding of the nation and the development of the American character.



- Chesapeake Bay Gateways are the more than 140 parks, wildlife refuges, museums, sailing ships, historic communities, water trails and land trails through which people connect to the Bay, its tributaries, and its 64,000 square mile watershed. The Gateways are managed by a variety of local, state, federal, and non-governmental organizations.
- The Gateways Network, authorized by Congress in 1998, is a partnership effort to help visitors find, enjoy, and learn about the special places and stories of the Chesapeake and its watershed. Linking the places people value to an understanding of the Chesapeake as a system is an integral part of the effort to conserve and restore the Bay's environment.
- Gateways are nominated by the organizations that manage them, and participate in the Network on a voluntary basis. Participation in the Network allows each site to become part of an integrated system for providing information to the public — through the Network's visitor-friendly web site, guides, maps, signage and logo. Gateways are also eligible for matching grants from the NPS for interpretation, access, conservation and restoration projects.
- The NPS acts as the facilitator and coordinator of the Gateways Network partnership, guided by a working group of Bay-related organizations. The NPS provides technical and financial support for maintaining the Network, as well as technical and financial assistance for designated Gateways.

See www.baygateways.net for more information.

Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program

Route 66 was the nation's first all-weather highway linking Chicago to Los Angeles. Route 66 linked the isolated and predominantly rural West to the densely populated urban Midwest and Northeast. Federal legislation has recognized Route 66 as "a symbol of the American people's heritage of travel and their legacy of seeking a better life."

- Congress created the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program to assist state and local, state, tribal, and federal governments and private property owners in the preservation of sites of interest along 2,400 miles of historic highway linking Chicago and Los Angeles.
- The program, established in 2001 and administered by the NPS, involves collaboration with public and private entities to address Route 66 preservation needs. The program provides cost-share grants to help preserve historic Route 66 buildings and structures, as well as research, planning, oral history, interpretation, and education/outreach projects. The program provides technical assistance, and serves as a clearinghouse of information.
- Designed as a "seed," or stimulus, program, it is scheduled to legislatively terminate at the end of 2009. Unless reauthorized by Congress at that time, it is anticipated that program responsibilities will be assumed by nonfederal entities.
- The program has produced a Directory of Financial and Technical Assistance to provide information about organizations and programs that can provide assistance.
- In California, \$72,000 in cost-share grant funding has been awarded to survey, planning, and historic preservation projects, including a \$50,000 cost-share grant toward the rehabilitation of the Aztec Hotel, in Monrovia.
- A web-based travel itinerary for Route 66 is being developed in cooperation with the National Register of Historic Places. The website will enable visitors to plan their Route 66 travel around National Register-listed properties.

See www.cr.nps.gov/rt66 for more information.



National Historic Trails

The following case studies describe national historic trails that traverse the Los Angeles region.

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

The Anza Expedition had far reaching consequences for the development of an important region of the United States. It helped to establish a strategic northern Spanish military outpost that eventually evolved into the city of San Francisco. The trail provides opportunities for visitors to experience landscapes similar to those the expedition encountered and to visit sites associated with the expedition.



- Established in 1990 to commemorate the route followed by Spanish commander Juan Bautista de Anza in 1775-76, when he led a contingent of soldiers and their families from Mexico to found a presidio and mission near the San Francisco Bay.
- The 1,200-mile long trail, administered by the NPS, starts in Nogales, Arizona, and travels to San Francisco, passing through the Los Angeles region. An additional 640 miles of the trail are in Mexico.
- The auto route links over 120 sites related to Spanish colonial history in California and Arizona. Publicly-owned portions of the historic trail can be used for hiking, horseback riding, or biking.
- The NPS works in partnership with organizations, private landowners, and volunteers to provide recreation, public education and interpretation. These efforts include interpretive walks and talks, trail guides, and temporary exhibits that are placed in visitor centers along the trail and used by volunteer groups.
- Trail sites, segments, and interpretive facilities are added to the national historic trail on a voluntary basis through certification agreements between the owner or managers and the NPS.
- Volunteer trail groups and partners participate in the development and maintenance of the trail.
- No lands outside the boundaries of any federally administered area may be acquired for the trail without the consent of the owner.

See www.nps.gov/juba for more information.

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

The historic Old Spanish Trail linked Mexican settlements in southern California with those in northern New Mexico. Establishing this route across the remote deserts and mountains of Mexico's far northern frontier was difficult. In 1829 Mexican trader Antonio Armijo succeeded in establishing a route from Abiquiu, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, along a route previously used for travel and trade by American Indian people and Spanish explorers and traders. Armijo's successful return from California spurred more trade, and from 1829 until 1848, traders used the route for transporting New Mexico woolen goods to Los Angeles, and in wrangling California-bred horses and mules back to New Mexico. Santa Fe became the hub of an international commercial trail network.

- Designated in December 2002 as part of the National Trails System.
- The national historic trail, which is more than 2,700 miles long and crosses New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and California, goes through the Los Angeles region paralleling the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.
- The Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service jointly administer the national historic trail. The Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA) is the primary non-federal partner and advocate for trail planning and resource management.
- A comprehensive management plan for the trail is underway.
- The BLM and NPS will work with partners to provide recreation, public education and interpretation, including: marking trails for public use, conducting historic and archeological research, developing visitor services and facilities, and protecting trail-related sites and segments along the historic routes.
- No lands outside the boundaries of any federally administered area may be acquired for the trail without the consent of the owner.

See www.nps.gov/olsp for more information.



photo: OSTA

NPS Grants and Technical Assistance Programs

The National Park Service administers many programs that provide funding and technical assistance to states and local communities. Here are some examples of programs that have benefited communities in the Los Angeles region.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

- Provides matching grants to state and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.
- 75% of the total funds have gone to locally sponsored projects to provide close-to-home recreation opportunities. Since 1966, the program has provided approximately 210 grants for projects in Los Angeles County, and 63 grants for Orange County projects.
- Grants have funded acquisition of park and recreation lands, development of parks and recreational facilities, redevelopment of older facilities including improved access, and studies on recreation potential, needs, opportunities and policies.
- Property acquired or developed with LWCF assistance is to be maintained perpetually in public recreation use.

Some LWCF funded projects in the Los Angeles area:

- Chino Hills State Park: a \$4 million grant was recently awarded for access improvements, trails, and recreation facilities.



- Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area development
- Whittier Narrows (various development projects)
- Sycamore Canyon Trail development (Diamond Bar)

See www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/lwcf for more information.

Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program

- Provides federal assistance to urban localities for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities through matching grants and technical assistance. This program was last funded in 2002.

See www.nps.gov/uparr for more information.

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

- Provides technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.
- Works in urban, rural, and suburban communities with the goal of helping communities achieve on-the-ground conservation successes for their projects.
- RTCA provides a variety of assistance tailored to the partner's needs, but does not provide direct grants.
- Projects are primarily focused on organization-building, planning, and coordination for conservation and outdoor recreation.

Projects within the Los Angeles area include:

- San Gabriel River Master Plan: assistance to Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.
- Western Puente Hills Access: to increase public access through development of a 30-mile trail system.
- Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan: to inventory river-related recreation resources.
- LA River Master Plan: to recommend and implement projects that illustrate environmental and recreational opportunities along the Los Angeles River.

See www.nps.gov/rtca for more information.

Federal Lands to Parks Program

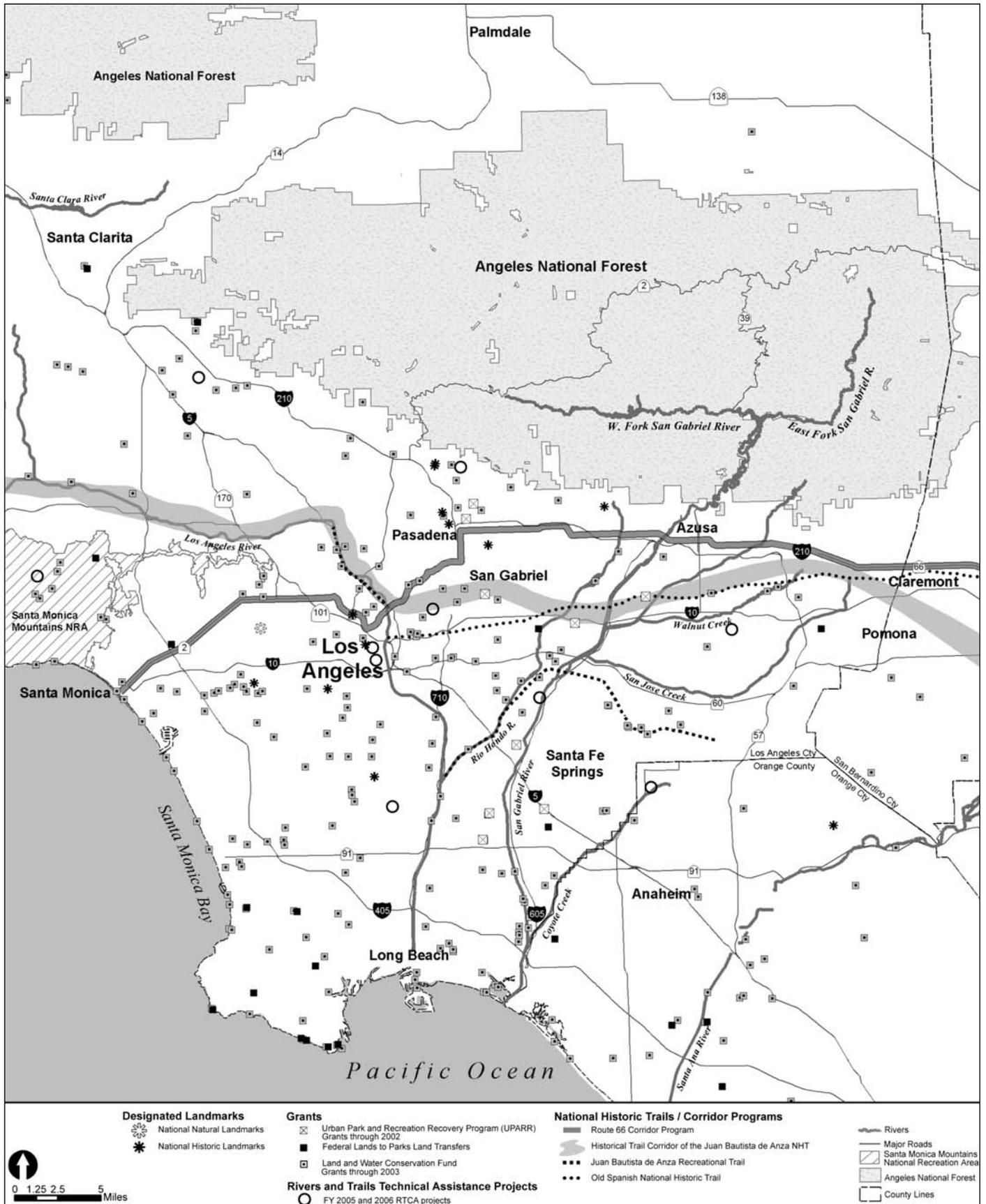
- Helps communities create or expand parks and recreation areas by transferring surplus Federal land to state and local governments. May include open space, cultural, natural, and recreational resources, access to rivers, lakes, and recreational facilities.
- Over 1,400 properties, have been transferred to state and local governments for parks and recreation areas since the program's inception in 1949.
- NPS assists the community in acquiring land from the federal government, through the application process and ownership transfer; advocates on behalf of the community for acquisition of land, and ensures permanent public recreational use and stewardship of the land.

Examples of land transfers in the Los Angeles area:

- Garvey Community Center site, 2 acres, Rosemead
- Veteran's Park, 11.4 acres, Pomona
- The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority intends to apply for Nike Site 29 (20 acre-ridgeline area in Los Angeles County), within the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor.

See www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/flp for more information.

National Park Service Programs, Assistance, and Sites in the Los Angeles Region



National Historic Landmarks and National Natural Landmarks Programs

The following NPS programs provide recognition for nationally significant resources and offer technical assistance to the owners of these sites.

National Historic Landmarks Program

- National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are 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.
- NPS staff work to nominate new landmarks and provide technical assistance to landmark owners and managers.
- Listing of property as a National Historic Landmark does not limit the property owner's use of the property. The NPS may recommend various preservation actions, but owners are not obligated to carry out these recommendations.
- NPS provides a plaque and certificate to recognize the conservation effort.
- Limited federal grants are available through the Historic Preservation Fund; some funding sources give NHLs higher priority for funding than other historic properties; there are federal income tax incentives for donating easements and for rehabilitating income-generating historic buildings.

National Historic Landmarks in the Los Angeles area:

- David B. Gamble House, Pasadena
- Upton Sinclair House, Monrovia
- Richard M. Nixon Birthplace, Yorba Linda

See www.cr.nps.gov/landmarks.htm for more information.

National Natural Landmarks Program

- The National Natural Landmark (NNL) Program recognizes and encourages the conservation of outstanding examples of biological and geological features in both public and private ownership.
- The program involves federal, state, county, private organizations, and individual landowners working together to retain the integrity of the NNL property as it was when designated.
- Participation in the program is voluntary. The NPS may assist NNL owners and managers with conservation of NNL sites if requested.
- NPS provides a plaque and certificate to recognize the conservation effort.
- Some owners of NNLs may be eligible to take a charitable contribution deduction on their income tax for conservation purposes.
- Funds to better manage an NNL may be available from the NPS's Challenge Cost Share Program as well as other sources (e.g., the 1996 Farm Bill administered by the US Forest Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service).

National Natural Landmark in the Los Angeles area:

- Rancho La Brea NNL (La Brea Tarpits), Los Angeles

See www.nature.nps.gov/nnl for more information.

Examples of National Historic Landmarks and National Natural Landmarks in the Los Angeles Region



Upton Sinclair House NHL



David B. Gamble House NHL



Richard Nixon Birthplace NHL



La Brea Tarpits NNL

All photos by the National Park Service except where noted.

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