



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study & Environmental Assessment

**Finding of No Significant Impact
October 2012**



***San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains
Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment***

California

October 2012

Introduction

The San Gabriel River Watershed Study Act (P.L. 108-042, July 2003) authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a special resource study of (1) the San Gabriel River and its tributaries north of and including the city of Santa Fe Springs, and (2) the San Gabriel Mountains within the territory of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.

The purpose of this special resource study is to determine whether any portion of the San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains study area is eligible to be designated as a unit of the national park system. Through the study process, the NPS identified alternative strategies to manage, protect, or restore the study area's resources, and to provide or enhance recreational opportunities. The study conveys information to the U.S. Department of the Interior and Congress to aid in determining whether designation of a unit of the national park system is desirable and appropriate.

The National Park Service finds that the resources evaluated through this study are nationally significant, suitable, feasible and appropriate for NPS management. This document identifies the selection of the most effective and efficient alternative ("the selected alternative") and the basis for a determination that completion of the study results in no associated significant impacts on the human environment.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this study is to comply with the San Gabriel River Watershed Study Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-042) which directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the area described above, in consultation with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and other appropriate governmental entities, and with consideration of regional flood control and drainage needs and publicly owned infrastructure such as wastewater treatment facilities.

The special resource study followed the process established by the National Park System New Area Studies Act (P.L. 105-391, 16 U.S.C. § 1a-5). This law requires that these studies be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321- 4347). At the beginning of the study process, the NPS initiated a notice of scoping that was published in the Federal Register on January 19, 2005 (70 FR 3064). Through the initial public scoping process, the NPS identified a range of issues to address through the study, as well as impacts of concern to the public.

This study is needed to provide the Secretary of the Interior and Congress with information on opportunities for management of the resources found within the study area. It identifies and analyzes alternatives for the management, administration, and protection of those resources, and evaluates their appropriateness for becoming a unit of the national park system.

Study Area

The study legislation directed the NPS to conduct a Special Resource Study of the following areas: (1) the San Gabriel River and its tributaries north of, and including, the city of Santa Fe Springs; and (2) the San Gabriel Mountains within the territory of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. The National Park Service defined the area for study through examination of the study act's legislative history and intent and through the public scoping process.

The study area covers more than 1,000 square miles (over 700,000 acres) in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan region. It includes some of the most densely populated and diverse areas of the United States. Most of the study area is located in Los Angeles County (approximately 85%) and the remainder lies in Orange and San Bernardino counties. In addition to a portion of the San Gabriel River watershed, the study area also includes portions of the Los Angeles River, the Santa Clara River, and the Antelope Valley watersheds, as well as very small portions of the Santa Ana River and Mojave watersheds.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages approximately two thirds of the study area (450,000 acres in the San Gabriel Mountains) as part of the Angeles National Forest (Angeles NF). With the exception of private inholdings, permitted cabins, ski areas, roads, and flood protection structures and other utilities, the forest remains primarily undeveloped. In close proximity to highly urban areas, the forest provides a refuge for wildlife and recreational opportunities for the greater Los Angeles metropolitan region.

Over fifty communities are located in the study area, with approximately 1.5 million residents. The Los Angeles metropolitan region is home to over 16 million residents. The largest communities in the study area include Pomona and Santa Clarita, with populations near 150,000. The City of Palmdale is the largest community at the northern end of the study area with approximately 115,000 residents.

Evaluation of Nationally Significant Resources

The NPS has determined that two regions of the study area are nationally significant under the National Park Service New Area Studies Act criteria; the San Gabriel Mountains and the Puente-Chino Hills. The San Gabriel Mountains and foothills are nationally significant for their geologic resources, high biodiversity, dynamic river systems, and a long history of scientific study and discovery. The active mountain system has created scenic and unusual landscapes that support a high level of ecological diversity and contain a uniquely diverse assemblage of geologic resources and features. Nationally significant cultural resources include the Mount Wilson Observatory and San Dimas Experimental Forest. The Puente-Chino Hills contain a high level of biodiversity and outstanding examples of southern California communities, including coastal sage scrub, one of the most endangered plant communities in California, and the best remaining stands of California walnut-dominated forests and woodlands in their southern limit of distribution.

Evaluation of Suitability

This study concludes that portions of the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente-Chino Hills, as described in the draft study report, are suitable for inclusion in the national park system, based upon an evaluation of the study area resources and their relative quality, character, and rarity. Together, the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente-Chino Hills contain a combination of themes and resources not found in any national park unit or comparably managed area.

Evaluation of Feasibility

The study concludes that a collaborative partnership-based park unit, which respects the complex mix of land use, ownership, and regulatory authority in the study area, is feasible. Opportunities for collaborative management with local, state and federal managers to protect natural and cultural resources, to provide recreation, public access, interpretation and educational opportunities, and other compatible uses in a partnership-based park unit have been demonstrated to exist. A large traditional national park unit, owned and operated solely by the National Park Service, is determined to be infeasible.

Need for NPS Management

The study concludes that a collaborative management approach which includes a leadership role for the National Park Service is a superior management option for meeting the complex conservation and recreation needs of the study area. In particular, the NPS has the ability to work in a coordinated fashion, on a regional basis, to address equitable access to open space, protection of significant resources, and interpretation and education of significant resources. Existing NPS assistance programs are currently insufficient to address these needs in the study area.

Alternatives Analyzed

Four alternatives were analyzed in the *San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Draft Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment*. The alternatives are based on the purpose and need for the project and are consistent with existing laws, NPS policy and the special resource study legislation.

No Action Alternative: Continuation of Current Management

Public land management agencies and local governments would continue their land management, visitor services, public education, recreation and interpretive programs at approximately the current levels of activity and funding, according to current plans. Existing cooperative management efforts would continue. The National Park Service would have no role in the study area beyond the existing segments of two national historic trails, some ongoing technical assistance from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, and limited financial assistance through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Alternative A: San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area

Congress would designate the San Gabriel Mountains unit of the Angeles National Forest (Angeles NF) as a National Recreation Area (NRA) that would continue to be managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The designation would bring additional recognition, tools, and support to the Angeles NF in order to steward watershed resources and ecosystems, and improve recreational opportunities. The National Park Service would have no role in the NRA beyond a continuation of the informal partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and Santa Monica Mountains NRA.

Alternative C: San Gabriel Watershed National Recreation Area

Congress would designate the upper San Gabriel River watershed within the Angeles NF and a half-mile corridor around the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo rivers within the study area as a National Recreation Area to be managed by a voluntary partnership of agencies and organizations with land and interests in the designated area. The primary roles of the NPS would be coordination of the partnership and taking a lead role in coordinating interpretive and educational messages about significant resources. Each partner and other jurisdictional authorities would retain land ownership, management, and decision-making authority for lands

that they own. The partnership would work to create new recreational and open space opportunities that are compatible with maintaining watershed values, water supply, flood protection, and habitat values.

Alternative D: San Gabriel Region National Recreation Area

Congress would designate the San Gabriel Mountains unit of the Angeles NF, adjacent foothill areas with ecological resource values, areas near the San Andreas Fault, portions of the western Puente Hills, and half-mile corridors along the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo rivers as a National Recreation Area. The NRA would be managed much the same as described under alternative C, under a partnership comprised of agencies and organizations with interests in the area. The NPS role would be essentially the same as in alternative C, but with the addition of a technical assistance program to provide conservation and recreation planning assistance to interested public agencies, private landowners, and organizations beyond the NRA boundaries to create and connect parks, conserve habitat and provide new recreational experiences throughout the region.

Alternatives Considered But Dismissed

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NPS policy, alternatives may be eliminated from detailed study based on the following reasons (40 CFR 1502.14(a)):

1. Technical or economic infeasibility;
2. Inability to meet project objectives or resolve need for the project;
3. Duplication of other less environmentally damaging alternatives;
4. Conflicts with an up-to-date valid plan, statement of purpose and significance, or other policy; and therefore would require a major change in that plan or policy to implement; and
5. Environmental impacts would be too great.

Public review of preliminary alternatives revealed a high level of dissatisfaction for preliminary alternative B, the San Gabriel Parks and Open Space Network. Alternative B envisioned a network of public and private partners engaged in collaborative planning and information sharing, focused on open space, recreation, wildlife corridor, and interpretive opportunities. This alternative was dismissed for its inability to meet project objectives, as determined through agency and public input.

The Selected Alternative

Concept

The most effective and efficient alternative is primarily a combination of management concepts from alternative A (San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area) and alternative D (San Gabriel Region National Recreation Area), as presented in the *San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Draft Special Resource Study*. Some additional refinements have been made to reflect public concerns, provide for efficient management, and to take advantage of new authorities provided to the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) through the Service First authority (made permanent in December 2011).

The selected alternative would establish a San Gabriel unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area which would provide the NPS, and other land management agencies and organizations with guidance and direction to work together in new ways. Partnership arrangements among federal and state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and area landowners would be the primary means to achieve the conservation, recreational, and educational goals of the San Gabriel unit. The Angeles National Forest (Angeles NF) would not be included in the San Gabriel unit. The NPS and USFS would work in partnership through

the Service First Authority and legislative guidance would provide additional support and authorities for the Angeles NF to steward resources and improve recreational opportunities.

Specifically, components of the selected alternative would include:

San Gabriel unit of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA (San Gabriel unit). The San Gabriel Mountains foothills, San Gabriel and Rio Hondo river corridors and the western Puente Hills (alternative D south of the Angeles NF) would be established as an additional unit of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA. The NPS and numerous other agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area would: 1) work collaboratively to protect significant resources, restore ecological communities, and improve recreational opportunities; 2) provide technical assistance to willing communities for conservation planning to extend open space connections and form a network of parks, habitats, and open spaces; and 3) offer new educational and interpretive opportunities.

Angeles National Forest. The selected alternative would also bring additional recognition, tools, and support to the Angeles NF in order to steward watershed resources and ecosystems and improve recreational opportunities. In lieu of a new designation for the Angeles NF, this guidance would: 1) reaffirm the primary importance of the Angeles NF in preserving watershed and natural resources, while continuing to provide for multiple use management; and 2) prioritize funding for resource protection, recreation, and education, and establish mechanisms to increase funding for facilities, maintenance, ecological restoration, visitor management; and offer new educational programming, and stewardship activities. This would be accomplished without a national recreation area designation on the Angeles NF.

Collaborative Federal Management. The NPS and USFS would collaborate through the Service First authority and other mechanisms to protect the significant resources of the San Gabriel watershed and mountains, provide high quality recreation and education opportunities, and assist the surrounding communities in providing community-based recreation and conservation opportunities. The NPS and the USFS would work together:

- To explore opportunities to protect and enhance interconnected ecosystems essential for long-term viability of significant natural resources.
- To help communities provide close-to-home outdoor recreation, conservation and education opportunities for their residents, as well as to better connect to the nearby national park and national forest areas.
- To provide an array of seamless outdoor experiences in the San Gabriel watershed and mountains.

Proposed Area

THE SAN GABRIEL UNIT

The San Gabriel unit of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA is shown on the attached map (p. 23) and would include:

- The San Gabriel Mountains foothill areas in the San Gabriel Valley with ecological resource values. Areas with ecological resource values include designated critical habitat for federally listed threatened or endangered species, and areas within one of the Los Angeles County proposed significant ecological areas;
- A half-mile corridor around the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo rivers from the Angeles NF boundary south to Santa Fe Springs; and
- Portions of the western Puente Hills with ecological resource value and recreational potential (areas west of Harbor Boulevard). This primarily includes lands owned/or and managed by the Puente Hills

Habitat Preservation Authority and lands proposed by Los Angeles County to be included in the Puente Hills Significant Ecological Area. The Puente Hills Landfill would not be included in the boundary. However, at some time in the future, the NPS and the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority could enter into management agreements with the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County to provide recreational opportunities in this area.

The San Gabriel unit would include approximately 49,000 acres of land; approximately 37% of this area is already protected for conservation or recreation by existing agencies and organizations.

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

The San Gabriel Mountains, within the Angeles NF, are also addressed in the selected alternative. However, no new designation would be applied to this area.

Management

SAN GABRIEL UNIT

The San Gabriel unit of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA would be managed in partnership with agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area. Agencies and organizations that own and manage land within the San Gabriel unit would continue to manage their lands according to their own policies and regulations. NPS policies would only apply to lands that the NPS acquires. As much of the land within the NRA is currently in public ownership and much of the remaining land is comprised of commercial and residential uses inappropriate for NPS management, land acquisition by the NPS would be limited.

The San Gabriel unit partners could include, but would not be limited to, the following agencies: the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Lower Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the 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, the Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority, the Mountains and Recreation Conservation Authority, and the Watershed Conservation Authority. Local communities/cities could also participate in the partnership. Through cooperative management agreements, partners would be able to provide coordinated educational and recreational programming, and share funding, staff, and facilities. In existing public land areas, interagency agreements could augment agency staffing to manage heavily used areas providing higher levels of visitor services, education, and safety. Other partnerships could also be established, such as with community-based organizations and tribal groups.

NPS Role. The NPS would take a lead role in coordinating partnership-based activities within the San Gabriel unit. Through cooperative management agreements, the NPS could also provide educational, interpretive, law enforcement and other services to partner agencies. The NPS would also take a lead role in providing coordinated interpretative and educational messages about the significance of the San Gabriel watershed and mountains for existing nature centers, museums, park programs, etc.

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 San Gabriel unit to protect significant resources or for operational purposes.

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 San Gabriel unit and on the Angeles NF.

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

The Angeles NF would continue to be managed by the USFS according to existing guiding policies. Additional guidance 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 San Gabriel Mountains. In addition, the Angeles NF would have the ability to accept donations from philanthropic and partner organizations to improve facilities and resources.

Service First Authority. Legislative guidance would also direct the USFS and the NPS to engage in partnership efforts and interagency coordination to protect the significant resources of the San Gabriel watershed and mountains, provide high quality recreation and education opportunities, and assist the surrounding communities in providing community-based recreation and conservation opportunities. Such partnerships could be facilitated through the Service First authority and other mechanisms.

The laws creating the Service First authority (December 2011) give the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture the authority to establish programs involving certain land management agencies to:

- Conduct activities jointly or on behalf of one another;
- Collocate in Federal offices or leased facilities; and
- Make reciprocal delegations of their respective authorities, duties and responsibilities
- Make transfer of funds and reimbursement of funds on an annual basis, including transfers and reimbursements for multi-year projects.

The Service First authority provides for interagency operational efficiency in attaining shared goals and missions, allows agencies to develop programs and projects tailored to meet shared objectives, allows agencies to share equipment, facilities and other resources to accomplish mutually agreed-upon work, and allows the re-delegation of staff authorities, duties and responsibilities among participating Service First agencies (NPS, USFS, BLM, FWS). Execution of partnership efforts is achieved through a Service First agreement, which documents agency commitment to accomplish mutual interest. Allocation of specific funding can be identified to implement and accomplish programs and projects outlined in a Service First agreement.

Existing Agencies, Regulatory Authorities, and Land Use

SAN GABRIEL UNIT

Much of the land within the proposed San Gabriel unit (approximately 37%) is already protected by various agencies and organizations. The National Park Service recognizes that existing public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals successfully manage important natural and cultural resources and recreational opportunities within the proposed San Gabriel unit. The NPS applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies.

Retention of Local Land Use and Existing Regulatory Authorities. The designation of an NPS national recreation area unit 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. The

selected alternative 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. Many of these facilities are located on or near the San Gabriel River. The San Gabriel River Watershed Study Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-042) directed that the study consider regional flood control and drainage needs and publicly owned infrastructure such as wastewater treatment facilities. The study recommends that any resulting legislation ensure that infrastructure designed for flood protection, storage and transport of water supplies, treatment of water and wastewater, and management of solid waste would be unaffected by the designation. This includes exemption from 16 U.S.C. § 460l-22(c) (prohibition of solid waste disposal operations in national parks) for existing solid waste facilities and operations, such as landfills and transfer stations, within the San Gabriel unit.

The selected alternative would retain existing water rights. Management of water supply and treatment plants would continue under current authorities. The proposed San Gabriel unit designation would not entail any new or future beneficial uses or requirements for water supply, water quality, or air quality regulations.

Private Property Rights. Any legislation proposed to implement study recommendations should specify that eminent domain would not be used for land acquisition within the San Gabriel unit. 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 San Gabriel unit partnership could work together to take a pro-active approach to coordinated resource management to reduce catastrophic fires.

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

U.S. Forest Service management of existing Angeles NF lands would continue. USFS policies would continue to be applied to management of these lands.

Education and Interpretation

SAN GABRIEL UNIT

Through new interpretive and educational programs, the NPS would engage people of all ages in learning about the significant natural and cultural resources within the San Gabriel watershed and mountains. 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, and early California settlement.

The NPS 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 watershed and mountains. The primary role of the NPS within the San Gabriel unit would be to lead the effort to provide coordinated interpretive messages and educational programs. The NPS would also work with partners to develop accessible interpretive and educational materials, including multi-lingual information and signage, to reach broader audiences.

In addition to programs conducted within the San Gabriel unit, NPS staff would coordinate with local school districts and area youth organizations to conduct environmental stewardship programs and engage youth in learning about the natural world around them. When needed and as funding permits, new facilities and programs could be developed to support educational efforts. The NPS Junior Ranger program could be promoted for school-aged children. There are also opportunities to inspire youth about the rich cultural heritage of the region.

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

The Angeles NF would be recognized for its nationally significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains. Working through Service First agreements, the USFS and the NPS 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. New opportunities for educational programs associated with the San Dimas Experimental Forest would be explored.

Recreational Opportunities and Access

SAN GABRIEL UNIT

Within the San Gabriel unit, a variety of recreational opportunities would continue to be available to the public. Many communities in the region, however, lack appropriate access to park and recreational resources. Recreational uses and activities would be determined by the existing land management agency. The NPS and partner agencies 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 NPS and partner agencies would explore opportunities to restore vacant or unused land to provide new recreational opportunities.

The NPS and partners would work together to target underserved and disadvantaged communities for engagement in the opportunities for and benefits of outdoor recreation. Children in communities that do not have adequate access to outdoor recreation tend to have higher rates of childhood diseases related to obesity such as diabetes. The NPS would conduct outreach to local communities, organizations, and schools to promote opportunities for healthy recreation in the San Gabriel unit.

The NPS would also work with partners to seek ways to improve the recreational experience in more heavily impacted areas 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 could focus on protecting the rural recreational experience by providing better trail connections and improved equestrian staging areas.

The voluntary information network would identify parks and sites with recreational and learning opportunities. This network would be 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 could find maps and guides linking one site with others pertaining to the same or related themes.

Many agencies are currently working to improve accessibility, as is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The NPS would work with partners to improve recreational access to the area's parks and public lands for persons with disabilities.

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

Recreation is the primary use in the Angeles NF. With over 3 million annual visitors, the Angeles NF 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. Increased attention and focused management resulting from new legislative directives may encourage additional or reprioritized federal funding for enhancing recreation 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.

Existing recreational opportunities would remain on the Angeles NF pursuant to USFS established rules and regulations. Future decisions regarding appropriate recreational opportunities would continue to be determined by the USFS, including administration of any recreational special use permits such as for recreational residences and ski areas.

New partnership opportunities may also assist the Angeles NF in fundraising for improved recreational experiences and planning for recreational connections (e.g. trails, bicycle paths). The NPS and USFS would partner and work together on recreational opportunities on the Angeles NF through Service First agreements. Such agreements allow the two agencies to share staff, funding, and offices to achieve mutual objectives.

Resource Protection (Ecological Communities and Cultural Resources)

The selected alternative would emphasize protecting significant resources associated with the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente Hills.

SAN GABRIEL UNIT

The NPS would facilitate opportunities to work in collaboration with resource management agencies and organizations to conserve and enhance resources through research, cooperative management, monitoring, and restoration. Ecological communities could be enhanced by additional scientific knowledge, expertise, and technical assistance.

The NPS and partner agencies would work together to identify opportunities to protect 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 change. Better ecosystem connectivity also fosters greater biodiversity. The NPS and partner agencies would seek to leverage additional funding for ecological restoration and wildlife habitat conservation efforts.

Coordinated cultural resource management would also be an emphasis. The NPS would seek to document, protect and interpret cultural resources within the San Gabriel unit. Such efforts would improve the ability of the NPS to develop interpretive materials and programming related to cultural resources.

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

The Angeles NF would continue to balance use and resource protection in accordance with its multiple-use policy. Legislative guidance could affirm the original intent of the national forest to protect watershed resources. Legislation could bring additional, tools, and resources to the Angeles NF 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 management agreements with non-

federal agencies and organizations 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. In general, a higher priority would be placed on ecological restoration.

The San Gabriel Mountains are rich in cultural resources including archeology, Native American resources, historic recreation sites, historic mining sites, architecture, and historic flood protection structures. New resources could be allocated to document, protect, and interpret cultural resources in the San Gabriel Mountains. Programs could be designed for the public to experience the cultural, historical, and spiritual value of the San Gabriel Mountains.

Operations and Maintenance

SAN GABRIEL UNIT

Existing agencies would continue to be responsible for the operation and maintenance of their lands and facilities. The NPS would be responsible for operations and maintenance of lands which it acquires.

Staffing. Given NPS budget constraints, it is likely that the San Gabriel unit would initially have a small staff, or rely on support from existing staff at Santa Monica Mountains NRA. However, funding would likely increase over time, subject to Congressional budget priorities. Soon after establishment, the NPS would complete a unit management plan that would identify park priorities, management emphases, and required NPS staffing for a 15-20 year timeframe.

Because the San Gabriel unit would be managed as part of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA and managed 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 of similar size and with small NPS landownership, the following types of staff might be recommended for the selected alternative. Some positions would be shared with the Santa Monica Mountains NRA staff based in Thousand Oaks, CA.

- Partnership Specialist
- Unit Manager
- 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

Through Service First or cooperative management agreements, the NPS and other partner agencies could share staff, facilities, and funding to assist in the operations and maintenance of heavily used visitor areas. For example, the NPS could provide rangers to supplement USFS staff in high use areas of the Angeles NF. The NPS and partner agencies 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 community members.

Land Acquisition. Lands within the San Gabriel unit would remain under their current jurisdictions, with each land management agency continuing to fund its own operations. Approximately 37% of the land in the proposed NRA is already protected for recreation and conservation by partner agencies (18,500 of approximately 49,000 acres). Much of the remaining lands are comprised of commercial and residential uses that would not be appropriate or feasible for NPS land acquisition. The NPS could request funding for land acquisition for acquisition of areas with resource significance such as a historic site or open space with native habitat. NPS land acquisition funding is extremely limited. Partner agencies may also pursue land acquisition within the San Gabriel unit. The NPS would be directed to identify priority parcels for acquisition (through donation or purchase) within two years of designation.

Operational and Visitor Facilities. Construction of new administrative facilities for NPS operations and management would not likely be required to support the proposed San Gabriel unit. Some staff and operational work could be accomplished at existing facilities within the Santa Monica Mountains NRA. However, given the distance to the San Gabriel Valley, an operational presence would also be necessary in the San Gabriel unit, particularly for education, outreach, and agency coordination positions. Given the existing amount of office space available in and near the proposed San Gabriel unit, 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 NF and various local and state park and recreation agencies also operate and manage existing visitor facilities. If established, the NPS would identify specific operational and visitor facilities needs through a unit management plan.

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

Legislative guidance may direct additional funding for operations and maintenance of the Angeles NF 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.

Use of the Service First authority would improve the customer service, effectiveness and efficiency of the NPS and Angeles NF in attaining shared goals by authorizing the two agencies to use each other's staff, equipment, facilities, and other resources, as appropriate, to accomplish mutually agreed-upon work.

Funding and Costs

The selected alternative would rely on the funding streams of partner agencies, as well as newly authorized NPS funding. Legislative guidance for the Angeles NF may authorize additional funding. Working in partnership with the NPS and other agencies, partners may be able to explore new fundraising opportunities to achieve

resource restoration and protection goals, as well as provide improved recreation, interpretation, and educational facilities and programs.

SAN GABRIEL UNIT

The NPS would need additional federal funding for its administrative, educational, technical assistance, and interpretive roles. In addition, the NPS and partner agencies 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 San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains. Partner organizations could also work together to leverage private funding and donations.

NPS operating costs for 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. While no formal estimates of operating costs have been completed for this study, budgets from comparable NPS units 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 \$8.9 million. 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 San Gabriel unit could be expected to be \$1 to \$3 million. The operational budget would primarily fund salaries. Additional costs would include leasing or maintaining administrative space, interpretive and educational materials or media, and maintenance of any NPS-owned facilities or lands.

Planning and Implementation Projects. The San Gabriel unit would be eligible to receive funding for planning and projects through the NPS. For example, soon after establishment, the NPS could provide initial planning funds for a unit management plan which would define management priorities, more specific actions, and funding needs for the San Gabriel unit. The unit management plan would be completed in collaboration with partners. A unit management for the size and scale of unit proposed in the selected alternative 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 unit management plan would identify more specific implementation needs.

Many NPS partnership parks 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.

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

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

The Angeles NF receives the majority of its funds through allocations appropriated by Congress. In FY2011, the Angeles NF 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 totaled \$900,000 for the entire forest. When adjusted for inflation, the Angeles NF has had a continuing drop in non-fire operational funding since 1995. Within the study area, total funding for the Angeles NF 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 NF 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.

This study recommends that any resulting legislation provide for specific additional funding to be allocated each year for recreation, planning, visitor services, wildlife management, and resource protection. Without this legislative direction, the Angeles NF is not likely to experience an increase of appropriated funds to meet the objectives of the selected alternative.

Additional opportunities for increased funding exist from outside sources. Legislation could allow the USFS to accept direct donations and provide mechanisms for developing diverse partnerships with nonprofit fundraising, support or friends groups. The elevated visibility and attention of a new designation adjacent to the Angeles NF, coupled with an increased sense of identity for those living in the region, could enhance the ability of the Angeles NF to more successfully raise private funds and seek special appropriations for particular projects. Legislative guidance could also create new authorities to retain fees such as special use permits, etc. to fund forest operations and programs.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The “environmentally preferred” alternative is the course of action that would best protect, preserve and enhance historic, cultural and natural resources, and that would cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment. The environmentally preferred alternative is not the same as an agency’s “preferred” or “most effective and efficient” alternative. The NPS has determined that alternative D would be the environmentally preferable alternative because it would protect natural and cultural resources, provide opportunities for recreation and visitation, realize greater economic benefits, and foster a broader framework for cooperative management over a larger area, as compared to the other alternatives, including the selected alternative. While the selected alternative would also provide these benefits, alternative D would provide them over a broader geographic area. However, because many of the same benefits could be realized under a more efficient management structure, alternative D was not selected as the most effective and efficient alternative.

Why the Selected Alternative Will Not Have a Significant Effect on the Quality of the Human Environment

The NPS has determined that the selected alternative can be recommended with no significant adverse effects on biological resources, cultural resources, recreation resources, socioeconomics, land use, or water resources.

This determination is based on the environmental impact analysis published in the draft study report which examined the effects of No Action and alternatives A, C, and D.

As defined in 40 CFR § 1508.27, significance of impacts is determined by examining the ten criteria below.

Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.

The NPS evaluated the potential environmental consequences of each alternative related to the following topics: biological resources; cultural resources; recreation use and visitor experience; socioeconomics; land use; and water resources. A range of minor impacts and beneficial effects is associated with the selected alternative (combination of alternatives A, C, and D).

Environmental effects would generally be beneficial. The impact analysis for all alternatives is necessarily broad to avoid speculation as to site-specific impacts, given the broad nature of the study. The outcome of the study is a recommendation to Congress. If Congress enacts the recommendations in this study, then specific actions would be developed and new environmental analyses would be undertaken prior to implementation. As with alternatives A, C, and D, the selected alternative would benefit biological resources by increasing opportunities for agencies to assist each other on restoration and conservation projects. Potential minor adverse effects due to increased recreational use would be mitigated through planning, visitor education, and staffing. Coordination of documentation, protection, and interpretation would benefit cultural resources. Collaboration between partners would also provide new recreational opportunities compatible with other values, such as flood protection and water supply. With enhanced or new recreation opportunities, small increases in visitation could have modest beneficial economic effects on surrounding communities. Park-poor communities would experience beneficial effects through collaborative planning for close-to-home recreation and improved access. There would be no effects on public and private land use and jurisdictional authority. Increased restoration efforts would have beneficial effects on water resources. Improved planning to align river recreation opportunities with the goals of flood protection, water quantity, and water quality, along with increased enforcement and visitor education, would mitigate the potential adverse effects of increased recreation.

The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

Selection of the most effective and efficient alternative will not adversely affect public health or safety. The study seeks to address public health and safety issues through its alternatives by fostering collaborative planning and management and increasing opportunities for healthful outdoor recreation. Because this level of study does not lend itself to meaningful environmental analysis of this topic, the topic was dismissed from additional analysis.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

Although situated in a large metropolitan region, portions of the study area contain wetlands, some prime farmlands, many historic and other cultural resources, ecologically critical areas, and an array of municipal, state, and federal park lands. These types of resources are among the values that the selected alternative would enhance and protect through coordinated planning, if Congress enacts the recommendations in the study, as well as additional funding and staffing. No adverse impacts to these resources have been identified.

The degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

No highly controversial effects, resulting from actions proposed in the alternatives, have been identified during either initial public scoping, preparation of the environmental assessment, or the public review period.

The vast majority of comments supported selection of alternative D, from which many of the management concepts of the selected alternative were retained. Objections to the action alternatives often focused on elements not contained within the alternatives presented to the public, or within the selected alternative. For example, many such comments expressed concern that an NPS national recreation area designation would transfer management and regulation of the Angeles National Forest to the NPS, an action not proposed in any alternative. Furthermore, the selected alternative does not propose a national recreation area overlay on the Angeles National Forest.

The degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

There were no highly uncertain, unique or unknown risks identified during either the preparation of the environmental assessment or the public review period.

The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The study does not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle because it only makes recommendations, based on completion of a prescribed evaluation process. These recommendations from the Director may be conveyed by the Secretary to the Congress. Development of specific actions responsive to the recommendation would require Congressional action and would subsequently be refined through a management planning process, including unit-specific environmental analysis, if established.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.

Other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions were analyzed for their potential to contribute to cumulative impacts in association with implementation of the selected alternative, if enacted by Congress. These include the cumulative effects of land use trends, including continuing development, urbanization, and population growth and demographic trends, both past and projected. The selected alternative seeks to ameliorate the adverse effects associated with these factors so that the overall level of cumulative impact under each impact topic would either be arrested or would decline as compared to the no action alternative. The effects of the selected alternative would comprise a very small component of these cumulative impacts, given the size and scope of the urban landscape within and surrounding the study area. Overall, the predominately beneficial impacts of the selected alternative, combined with the negligible to major adverse impacts from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, would not result in a significant cumulative adverse effect.

The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

Loss of historic sites from development, lack of documentation, and inadequate resource protection are continuing effects that the selected alternative seeks to remedy through increasing interagency coordination of cultural resource planning, protection, and documentation, as well as visitor education efforts. Overall, protection of historic structures and sites would be improved through the selected alternative. There would be no adverse effect or no effect on historic structures and identified cultural landscapes within the area of potential effect as a result of the selected alternative, beyond baseline conditions.

The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Increased restoration, interpretation and education, and inter-agency coordination of habitat protection would provide beneficial effects to threatened and endangered species. While the provision of new recreation opportunities holds the potential for additional impacts on wildlife and ecological communities, an emphasis on enhanced visitor education and coordinated planning, particularly with wildlife agencies, for recreation compatibility with watershed resource protection would keep adverse impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat to minor levels. This would result in a “may affect, but not likely to adversely affect” determination under the Endangered Species Act.

Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The selected alternative would not violate federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

Public Engagement

Public Scoping

The NPS initiated public scoping for this study in January 2005. The scoping process included meetings with agencies, elected officials and organizations, public meetings and workshops, three newsletters, a web page, and written public comments. These sources were used to identify the issues, significant resources, ideas for alternatives, and impact topics to be considered for environmental analysis.

The NPS study team used a variety of methods to notify the public and stakeholders of the study initiation. On January 19, 2005, a Notice of Scoping was published in the Federal Register, formally initiating the comment period for public scoping. The comment period extended to May 20, 2005. The study team compiled a mailing list of 3,000 from partner agencies and mailed a newsletter to this list. This newsletter described the study process and announced the dates and locations of public scoping meetings held throughout the study area. Public meetings were held in Rosemead, Claremont, Diamond Bar, Downey, and Acton. During the public scoping period, the NPS received 65 comment letters and e-mails from individuals, agencies, cities, organizations and elected officials.

Input on the scope of the study was also provided by the approximately 175 people who attended public meetings hosted by the NPS. Additional input was gathered through meetings with various individuals, agencies, organizations, cities, and local elected officials. After scoping comments were received, the NPS published a second newsletter summarizing the comments. The majority of scoping comments were related to the study process and scope, opportunities, potential impacts, and important resources to consider.

Following the scoping period, the NPS conducted additional outreach by holding numerous meetings with cities, communities, government councils, and elected officials to refine the study boundary based on both public comments and legislative intent. A third newsletter was published describing changes to the study scope (scope revision).

Alternative Concepts

The study team released draft alternative concepts in a newsletter for public review in the summer of 2009. The public comment period was open from August to November 2009. The study team distributed over 3,000 newsletters to organizations and individuals on its mailing list, partner agencies, and at public and stakeholder meetings. A limited number of newsletters translated into Spanish were also distributed. The newsletter was

also available for comment on the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website.

News releases announcing the availability of the alternatives newsletter and the public meetings schedule were distributed to local media, and several newspaper stories were published. The purposes of the newsletter were to: 1) present preliminary study findings; 2) present preliminary alternatives; and 3) solicit comments on the preliminary findings and alternatives. The newsletter also contained information on the date, time, and locations of public meetings that were held to solicit comments on the preliminary findings.

Between August and October 2009, the study team held six public meetings at locations throughout the study area including Diamond Bar, El Monte, Santa Clarita, Glendora, Palmdale, and Tujunga. All of the meetings were well attended by diverse groups of community members (approximately 450 total). In addition to the public meetings, the NPS study team held meetings with local, state and federal government agencies, organizations, communities, and Congressional offices.

The NPS received approximately 4,800 comments. Most of these comments were submitted via written letters and through e-mail. There were 205 unique letters and 4,600 form letters of five different types. The NPS received comments from 36 different agencies and organizations. The remainder was from individuals. The public meeting transcripts are also part of the public comments. A variety of views were expressed, but the majority of comments supported combining different aspects of the alternatives and having more NPS involvement and leadership. Some communities and agencies expressed concerns about loss of local control, or restrictions on their ability to carry out necessary functions. Other commenters expressed concerns about restrictions on recreational activities or impacts on their communities from increased recreational use. Better access to recreation and providing close to home opportunities were important goals for many commenters. Others expressed interest in furthering opportunities for connecting wildlife habitats and protecting watershed values. Following the comment period, the study team continued to meet with stakeholder groups and agencies to refine the alternatives.

Draft Report

In October 2011, the study team produced and distributed the Draft San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment to elected officials, government entities, organizations and individuals on the mailing list for review and comment. Approximately 600 copies of the draft study report and 2000 copies of the newsletter were distributed through mail, email and at public meetings. Additional copies were available online.

Five public meetings were held between October 29, 2011 and November 17, 2011 in El Monte, Palmdale, Pomona, Santa Clarita, and Tujunga. Over 400 individuals participated in the meetings, including various elected officials and stakeholders. The NPS presented the study process and criteria used in the study, discussed the study results, and solicited comments. Copies of the draft study report were made available and participants were encouraged to submit comments by mail or through the PEPC website. The comment period ended February 13, 2012, after being extended twice. The NPS received over 12,000 comments. There were 822 unique letters and over 11,000 form letters. Comments were received from diverse groups, including conservation organizations, Latino organizations, local governments, elected officials, park and conservation agencies, recreational interests and organizations, and public works agencies, including water, sanitation, and flood protection.

COMMENT SUMMARY

Generally, public comments were in favor of a national recreation area designation with NPS involvement. The vast majority of comments supported alternative D, citing a desire for NPS involvement over a broad

geographic area and a need for additional funding support for the Angeles NF. Many others supported the no action alternative, often questioning the need for NPS management or expressing concern that NPS involvement could lead to increased closures, restrictions, and regulations. In comparison, support for alternatives A and C was slight.

Approximately 95% of the comments were submitted as a result of several organized campaigns in support of alternative D. Supporters of alternative D often expressed a belief that NPS involvement in the area could provide valuable assistance to public land agencies, including the Angeles NF, and to local communities, improving recreation access and experiences for residents and enhancing the protection of open space, wildlife corridors, and other natural resource values. Many of the comments supporting alternative D also recommended changes outside of the scope of the study, including inclusion of lands outside of the study area and designation of new wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers on the Angeles NF.

Many who supported no action were concerned that a national recreation designation would lead to increased recreation in areas that are already heavily impacted, such as the San Gabriel River Canyon. Although it was not proposed in any of the alternatives, supporters of the no action alternative were often concerned that an NPS national recreation area designation would transfer management and regulation of the Angeles NF to the NPS, resulting in changes to existing recreation opportunities and special uses. Similarly, a few agencies were concerned whether a designation would have regulatory impacts on flood protection, water supply, sanitation, vector control, fish and game management, and agency operations. Increasing funding and support for the Angeles NF to manage recreation, however, was a common desire expressed by many supporters of both alternatives D and no action.

A public comment and response report summarizing comments received by the National Park Service during the public comment period is available on the study website at www.nps.gov/pwro/sangabriel.

Agency Consultation

As required by law, the National Park Service sent letters to the following agencies and tribal organizations in November 2005 to notify them of the study process and to seek their input:

AGENCIES

- Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service
- Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
- Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
- California Department of Fish and Game
- State Historic Preservation Office

TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Alliance of Native Americans
- Cahuilla Band
- California Indian Council Foundation
- Chumash
- Coastal Gabrielino Diegueno
- Costanoan - Rumsen Carmel Tb

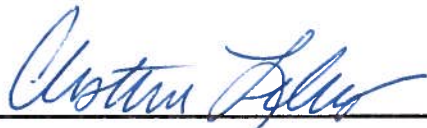
- Fernandeno / Tataviam Tribe
- Fontana Native American Indian Center, Inc.
- Gabrieleno/Tongva Tribal Council of San Gabriel
- Gabrielino - Tongva Nation
- Gabrielino - Tongva Springs
- Gabrielino – Tongva Tribe
- Gabrielino - Tongva Youth Council
- Gabrielino Band of Mission Indians of CA
- Ish Panesh United Band of Indians
- Juaneno Band of Mission Indians
- Kawaiisu Tribe
- Kitanemuk & Yowlumne Tejon Indians
- LA City/County Native American Indian Comm
- Los Coyotes Band of Mission Indians
- Owl Clan
- San Luis Rey Mission Band
- San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians
- San Manuel Tribal Administration
- Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians
- Soboba Band of Mission Indians
- Tehachapi Indian Tribe
- Tejon Indian Tribe
- Ti'At Society
- Tongva
- Tumamait
- Urban Indian Council

Congress directed that the study would be conducted in consultation with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and other appropriate federal, state, and local governmental entities, along with consideration of regional flood control and drainage needs and publicly owned infrastructure such as wastewater treatment facilities. The National Park Service met with or distributed information to many regional, state, and federal agencies, as well as local governments, public utilities, and organizations, throughout the study process. During the public review period, the NPS received over fifty comments from agencies, organizations, local governments, private business, and elected officials. Alternative D received wide support from cities, county agencies, state agencies, and twenty-three members of Congress. Most of the management concepts described under alternative D are also found in the selected alternative.

Findings

The NPS has determined that completion of this special resource study and recommendation of the most effective and efficient alternative to the Director does not constitute an action that normally requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The findings of the study will not have a significant effect on the human environment and no major environmental impacts are foreseen. There are no significant adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, historic properties either listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law. This determination also included due consideration of the supportive nature of the public comments and agency, tribal and county recommendations which were received. Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for this special resource study and thus will not be prepared.

Approved:



Christine S. Lehnertz
Pacific West Regional Director

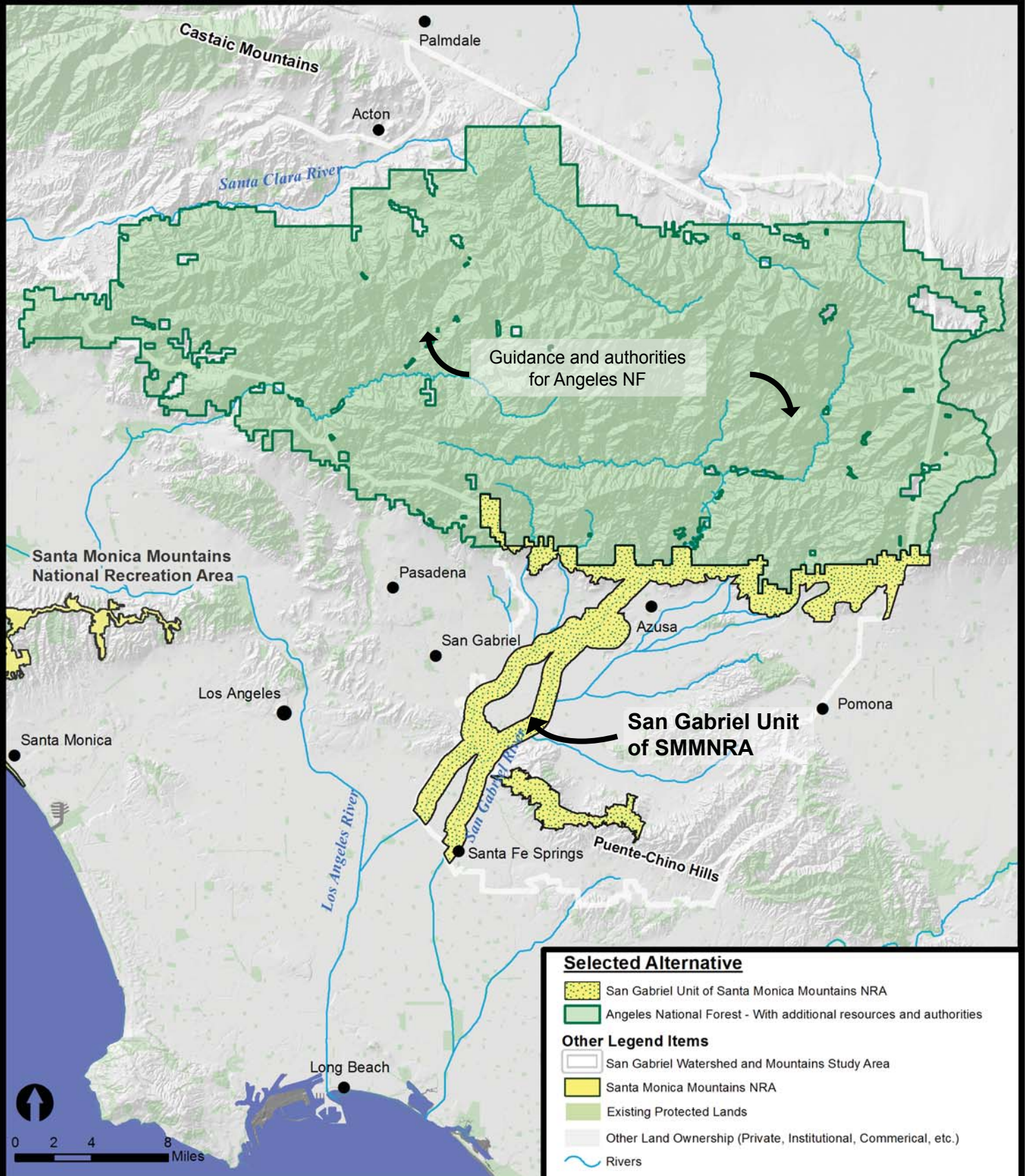


Date

Selected Alternative



San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study



National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office
October 2012

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

Sources: Existing Protected Lands, CPAD 1.8, ©July 2012
GreenInfo Network - www.calands.org, Selected Alternative
and Study Area (NPS), Rivers (National Hydrography Dataset, USGS).