



For Immediate Release
April 10, 2020

Contact: Sarah Rascon
Urban River Program Officer,
Mountains Recreation and Conservation
Authority
(213) 503-7937

SMMC Extends Upper LA River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan Outreach

Reader's guide released to focus attention on comprehensive plan calling for wide variety of projects with multiple benefits in neighborhoods across LA County

LOS ANGELES—In an effort to raise awareness about its proposed plan to revitalize the area around the Upper Los Angeles River and its tributaries, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) has released a reader's guide to inform the adjacent communities in LA County from Canoga Park to Pasadena.

The bilingual, 20-page document is available online at www.upperlariver.org. It outlines the improvements proposed and the extensive community outreach process that led to the development of the Upper LA River and Tributaries (ULART) Revitalization Plan.

The ULART Plan identifies more than 300 proposed opportunities and projects throughout numerous neighborhoods, with a priority on disadvantaged communities along the Aliso Canyon Wash, Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, Burbank Western Channel, Verdugo Wash, Arroyo Seco, and the Upper LA River. The ULART Revitalization Plan creates a chance to restore and add natural habitats and green areas that have been cemented over for decades of development by calling for multi-benefit projects that preserve and improve the natural resources of the region and increase the amount of open space in park-poor areas throughout LA County.

These inclusive, multi-purpose projects propose places that:

- 1.53 million people can easily walk to
- Capture almost 8,000 acre-feet of stormwater a year
- Plant and nurture 250,000 trees
- Provide over 1,000 miles of shaded green streets and trails
- Preserve, enhance and create over 6,000 acres of urban wildlife ecology

“The ULART Plan brings long overdue attention to the oft-ignored upper portion of the River and the surrounding area. By focusing on disadvantaged communities, the plan is a corrective to decades of planning efforts that left this region with a lack of open space and limited means to access it,” said Los

Angeles City Councilmember Monica Rodriguez, who chairs the ULART Working Group that oversaw the Plan's development.

"The tributaries are by and large single-purpose flood control channels, and the surrounding communities are urbanized areas offering few opportunities for park space," added Los Angeles City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, co-chair of the Working Group. "By concentrating on smaller-scale projects in these highly urbanized communities, the positive impacts will literally flow downstream and benefit all communities in this portion of the watershed."

"The ULART Plan supports the Conservancy's goal to integrate nature into the urban environment and create more recreational opportunities in areas that lack open space," said Irma Muñoz, Chair of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. "We are anxious to get to work to revitalize these waterways for nearby neighborhoods and the residents."

The release of the reader's guide comes in advance of the April 16, 2020, meeting where the ULART Working Group will formally consider adoption of the Plan.

State legislation in 2017 created the Working Group to develop the ULART Revitalization Plan to be administered by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The appointed Working Group was comprised of representatives from the State of California, Los Angeles County, and the cities adjoining the Upper LA River, along with community leaders, and was assisted by non-government organizations helping as partners in outreach and engagement.

The Plan is the fruit of a collaborative process that collected substantive input from the members of the surrounding communities by focusing on addressing the unique and diverse needs of the area. Over a period of 20 months, the Working Group convened 33 public meetings to gather feedback and develop a collaborative, inclusive planning process.

Chairperson Rodriguez stressed the importance of area residents, business owners, and stakeholders to educate themselves about the ULART Revitalization Plan and remain involved by participating in the process to bring its proposals to life.

"To help bring the projects proposed in this plan to life, communities must come together to act as stewards and work to see them through to reality," said Rodriguez. "Area residents, along with their government representatives, public agencies, and other stakeholders, will continue to play a vital role in the implementation of the ULART Plan by advocating for programs and projects and making sure they are aligned with regional and local priorities."

###

ABOUT THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is a State Agency that was established by the California State Legislature in 1980. Since that time, it has helped preserve more than 75,000 acres of parkland in both wilderness and urban settings. The Conservancy's mission is to strategically buy back, preserve, protect, restore, and enhance treasured pieces of Southern California to form an interlinking system of urban,



rural, and river parks, open space, trails, and wildlife habitat that are easily accessible to the general public.