

Map 2-2. Habitat and species occurrences.

behind the dam. It encompasses 2,125 acres in floodplain conditions, including significant stands of alluvial fan sage scrub habitat, a rare plant community that today only exists in isolated patches. This SEA also includes some stretches of riparian woodland and coastal sage scrub plant communities. The area supports many regional biological values, including protection of existing core populations of rare species, presence of plant communities with restricted distribution, essential habitat for resident species and migratory birds, and habitat linkages along the upper San Gabriel River.

#### Lower San Gabriel Valley (Reach 4)

**WHITTIER NARROWS DAM COUNTY RECREATION AREA.** This large area straddles the San Gabriel River above the Whittier Narrows Dam and stretches over to the Rio Hondo. This SEA encompasses 4,145 acres in an area that is a collection point for surface and groundwaters from the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo Watersheds. It presents a mix of oak, sycamore and willow riparian woodland, freshwater marsh, grasslands and coastal sage scrub. Whittier Narrows is a large and intact patch of rich habitat that is relatively isolated from other intact habitat patches in the watershed. Even so, it supports about 300 species of resident and migratory bird species. It also supports many regional biological values, including protection of existing core populations of rare species, presence of plant communities with restricted distribution, essential habitat for resident species and migratory birds, and potential habitat linkages along and between the San Gabriel River and the Puente Hills corridor. This SEA lies within land owned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation.

**PUENTE HILLS (PROPOSED).** The proposed SEA will encompass remaining habitat areas within the Puente Hills, including Whittier Narrows, Sycamore Canyon and Turnbull Canyon, Powder Canyon, Brea and Tonner Canyons. The total area proposed is 13,421 acres. These areas contain relatively undisturbed patches of woodland, shrubland, grassland and wetland communities. As part of an important wildlife corridor, the Puente Hills are virtually a habitat island, surrounded by urban development. This proposed SEA will include the existing Whittier Narrows Dam County Recreation Area. A majority of this proposed SEA occurs within unincorporated Los Angeles County, with the rest in the city limits of Industry, La Habra Heights, Montebello, Pico Rivera, South El Monte and Whittier.



Figure 2-32. Purple needlegrass, a once abundant native California bunchgrass, is now only found in small patches—it has been replaced by exotic annual grasses.

**RIO HONDO COLLEGE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY.** Located in the far northwest portion of the Puente Hills, adjacent to the Rio Hondo Community College (RHCC) campus and the Puente Hills Landfill, this SEA is approximately 109 acres and is used primarily by faculty and students at RHCC as a natural classroom and laboratory. The area includes examples of riparian woodland, chaparral, oak woodland, and coastal sage scrub communities. Students and professors at RHCC have recorded a wide variety of plant life and over 100 species of vertebrates here.

#### Upper Coastal Plain (Reach 5)

**SYCAMORE-TURNBULL CANYONS.** Located in the far southwestern portion of the Puente Hills, this SEA is about 607 acres and supports a number of plant communities including oak woodland, oak riparian forest, walnut woodland, southern willow scrub, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, freshwater marsh and non-native grassland. The SEA supports several habitat types that are considered sensitive biological resources because of the scarcity of vegetation and habitat for a number of the state and federally listed endangered, threatened and rare vascular plants, and several sensitive bird and reptile species.

#### Lower Coastal Plain (Reach 6)

There are no SEAs in this reach.



Figure 2-33. Riparian woodland habitat can be found within the river corridor.

#### Zone of Tidal Influence (Reach 7)

**ALAMITOS BAY.** This SEA is located at the lower end of the San Gabriel River Watershed at the outfall of the Los Cerritos Channel. It is a 43-acre remnant of salt marsh, one of the last remaining patches in Los Alamitos Bay not yet lost to urbanization. The mingling of salt water and fresh water provides a rich ecological mix of brackish conditions. Salt marshes are an important breeding ground for terrestrial and marine species, including commercial fish. Wintering migrating birds also benefit from this salt marsh system.

#### SENSITIVE SPECIES OCCURRENCES

An ecosystem is composed of all organisms in a given place, interacting with their physical surroundings. It is a complex, interdependent web. Every plant species requires certain conditions for survival, while plant communities consist of groups of plant species that have similar needs for survival. Wildlife species have adapted to specific conditions as well, and rely on both plant communities and other wildlife associations. Often, areas where different plant communities come together, also known as ecotones, present richer, more diverse conditions and a richer variety of wildlife. This is also called the “edge effect,” where two landscapes meet. And some species are specific to an ecotone, creating unique habitat zones.

The California Department of Fish and Game developed The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) to catalog rare and endangered plants, animals and vegetation types. CNDDDB is a database of actual sightings of rare plant and animal species, including rare species sightings along and near the San Gabriel River. It does not provide a complete picture of *all* existing habitat or open space areas containing commonly found species. However, it provides an inventory of areas of viable habitat. CNDDDB is continually being updated by experts in the field. Therefore a habitat area with no previous sighting may eventually be included in the database, once an official sighting is recorded. Large tracts of land statewide that have never been surveyed still have the potential to retain rare species.

CNDDDB contains over 40,000 records on rare plants, animals and natural communities. Its users include conservation groups such as local land trusts, The Nature Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, environmental planners, and federal, state and local governmental agencies. If a site contains a rare plant species according to the CNDDDB, a local lead agency can use that information to generate funding to protect the site or implement a restoration project. CNDDDB entries use several designations of plants and animals:

- State-listed rare, threatened or endangered
- State candidate for listing



Figure 2-34. Nelson's bighorn sheep is a subspecies of the desert bighorn shown here.

- Federally listed threatened or endangered
- Federally proposed threatened or endangered

A plant species is “endangered” when “the prospects of its survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition, or disease,” according to the State Department of Fish and Game (see Resources).

A plant species is “threatened” when it is “likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future in the absence of protection measures.”

A plant species is “rare” when the species is “found in such small numbers throughout its range that it may be endangered if its environment worsens.”

The following section lists known sensitive plant species and community and animal species that occur within a 2.5-mile distance on either side of the San Gabriel River. In more urbanized reaches, there may not be any occurrences of sensitive plant communities, indicating the fragmented nature of habitat there. Individual plants, although an important find, may not have a long-term chance at survival without its associated plants and wildlife species, as well as the natural disturbances such as flooding or fire that make up a healthy ecosystem. Planting these species is not necessarily recommended; see Appendix B for a sample list of plant species appropriate for planting in each reach.

#### Headwaters (Reach 1)

This reach contains a rich array of sensitive plant and animal species. That’s not surprising because it is the reach with the least amount of disturbance and the greatest quantity of contiguous open space, creating an area with high biodiversity value. The West Fork of the river corridor and associated canyons are rich in multiple species occurrences. Of particular significance, are the 700 Nelson’s bighorn sheep. This rare mammal, once numbering in the thousands, is the San Gabriel Mountains’ second largest mammal (after the mountain lion).

**PLANT COMMUNITIES.** Canyon Live Oak Ravine Forest, Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland

**PLANT SPECIES.** *Calochortus plummerae* (Plummer’s mariposa lily), *calochortus clavatus gracilis* (slender mariposa lily)

**WILDLIFE SPECIES.** *Gila orcutti* (arroyo chub), *rana muscosa* (mountain yellow-legged frog), *ovis canadensis nelsoni* (Nelson’s bighorn sheep), *rhinichthys osculus* (Santa Ana speckled dace), *catostomus santaanae* (Santa Ana sucker)

#### San Gabriel Canyon (Reach 2)

This reach is also rich in biodiversity, despite the two major dams that have altered the original structure and function of the river system. Although there has been a lack of sensitive species occurrences in this reach along the main stem of the river, there have been occurrences of rare species in the protected canyons leading down to the river, as well as up the East Fork.

**PLANT COMMUNITIES.** Canyon Live Oak Ravine Forest, Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland

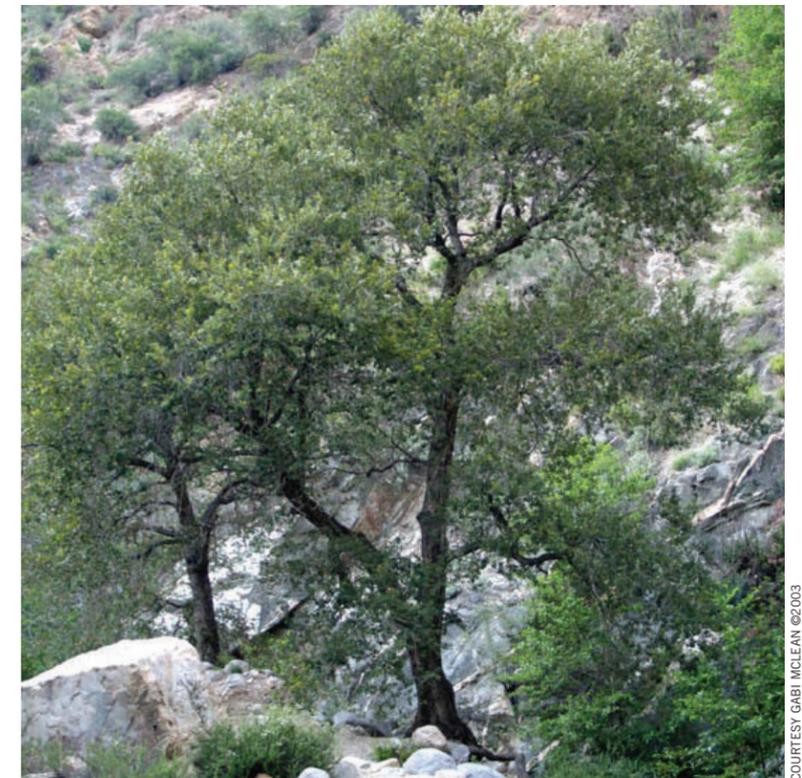


Figure 2-35. Canyon oaks provide habitat for small and large mammals and a variety of birds.

**PLANT SPECIES.** *Calochortus plummerae* (Plummer's mariposa lily), *dudleya densiflora* (San Gabriel Mountains dudleya)

**WILDLIFE SPECIES.** *Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei* (San Diego horned lizard)

**Upper San Gabriel Valley (Reach 3)**

Despite the vegetated soft-bottom of the San Gabriel River in this reach, species occurrences tend to occur mainly in the protected canyon, away from human activity. Most species sightings have occurred in the mountains and in the undeveloped floodplain area behind Santa Fe Dam; there are few sightings in the developed stretches of Azusa.

**PLANT COMMUNITIES.** Riversidian Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub, Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland, Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest



Figure 2-36. The Santa Ana sucker is found in the river above the San Gabriel Dam.

**PLANT SPECIES.** *Lepidium virginicum robinsonii* (Robinson's pepper-grass), *dudleya densiflora* (San Gabriel Mountains dudleya), *thelypteris puberula sonorensis* (Sonoran maiden fern)

**WILDLIFE SPECIES.** *Vireo bellii pusillus* (least Bell's vireo), *catostomus santaanae* (Santa Ana sucker), *thamnophis hammondi* (two-striped garter snake)

**Lower San Gabriel Valley (Reach 4)**

Residential and industrial land uses line this area of the river, which results in the complete absence of sensitive species occurrences in the



Figure 2-37. The coloring of the coast horned lizard helps it blend into chaparral and coastal sage scrub backgrounds.

upper section of the reach and only minimal occurrences in the middle of the reach. The Whittier Narrows, a large open space area in the lowest section of the reach, does have many rare plant and animal species, including about 300 species of birds. It is a native habitat that is now interlaced with exotic and invasive plants like arundo, and large expanses of turf and lined lakes for recreational uses.

**PLANT COMMUNITIES.** None

**PLANT SPECIES.** *Phacelia stellaris* (Brand's phacelia), *ribes divaricatum parishii* (Parish's gooseberry), *scutellaria bolanderi austromontana* (southern skullcap)

**WILDLIFE SPECIES.** *Vireo bellii pusillus* (least Bell's vireo), *phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei* (San Diego horned lizard), *coccyzus americanus occidentalis* (western yellow-billed cuckoo)

**Upper Coastal Plain (Reach 5)**

The few sensitive species occurrences in this reach are all in the river bottom and in the Puente Hills south of Whittier Narrows. A few rare plant types occur west of the river in this reach. This reach is heavily developed right up to the river, with some of the densest human populations found in Southern California. The only open spaces are the utility right-of-way corridors on both sides of the river. A few urban parks are strung along the river, but these are largely turf and non-native landscapes.

**PLANT COMMUNITIES.** None



Figure 2-38. The Brand's phacelia.

**PLANT SPECIES.** *Phacelia stellaris* (Brand's phacelia), *navarretia prostrata* (prostrate naverretia)

**WILDLIFE SPECIES.** *Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei* (San Diego horned lizard)

**Reach 6: Lower Coastal Plain (Reach 6)**

This is the concrete-lined stretch of the river and is heavily developed up to the river's edge. Toward the lower portion of the reach, as more and more open space becomes available, some sensitive species have been found. These sensitive species occurrences may be related to Coyote Creek, which joins the San Gabriel River below El Dorado Park in Long

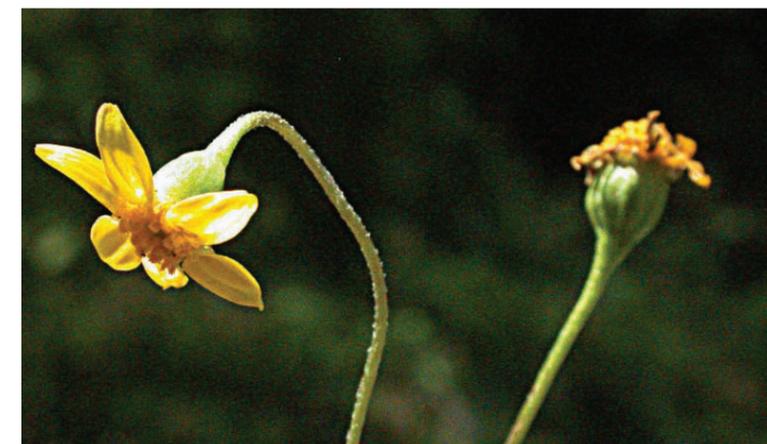


Figure 2-39. Coulter's goldfields occur naturally in the outer edges of tidal marshes.

Beach. However, there are no sensitive plant communities here, only isolated plant and animal species.

**PLANT COMMUNITIES.** none

**PLANT SPECIES.** *Orcuttia californica* (California Orcutt grass), *lasthenia glabrata coulteri* (Coulter's goldfields), *cordylanthus maritimus maritimus* (salt marsh bird's beak), *hemizonia parryi australis* (southern tarplant)

**WILDLIFE SPECIES.** *Danaus plexippus* (monarch butterfly), *phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei* (San Diego horned lizard), *coccyzus americanus occidentalis* (western yellow-billed cuckoo)

**Zone of Tidal Influence (Reach 7)**

The Pacific Ocean, coastal wetlands and large expanses of open space combine to make this the second richest area of biodiversity along the river. The southern coastal salt marsh plant community can be found here, a rare habitat within Southern California, and the only major plant community found below the Santa Fe Dam.

**PLANT COMMUNITIES.** Southern Coastal Salt Marsh



Figure 2-40. Urbanization has greatly decreased the burrowing owl habitat and reduced the total number of owls.

**PLANT SPECIES.** *Nemacaulis denudata var. denudata* (coast woolly-heads), *lasthenia glabrata coulteri* (Coulter's goldfields), *cordylanthus maritimus maritimus* (salt marsh bird's beak), *sidalcea neomexicana* (salt spring checkerbloom), *hemizonia parryi australis* (southern tarplant)

**WILDLIFE SPECIES.** *Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi* (Belding's savannah sparrow), *athene cunicularia hypogaeae* (burrowing owl), *rallus longirostris levipes* (light-footed clapper rail), *danaus plexippus* (monarch butterfly), *phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei* (San Diego horned lizard), *charadrius alexandrinus nivosus* (western snowy plover)

**Existing Trails and Bridges**

One of the more notable non-flood control, non-water conservation structures along the San Gabriel River is the 39-mile bike trail beginning in Azusa and extending all the way to the Pacific coast. There are access points from most major streets and direct access to 15 parks. This north-south trail is intersected by other east-west trails. The entire trail network may be expanded in the future.

This overview of the trail system focuses on trails within one-half mile of the river, including trails that bisect the river from the east and west. It does not include more localized trails developed and maintained by the cities along the course of the river.



Figure 2-41. Equestrian trails line the riverbanks in many communities.

Most of these trails are multi-use for bicyclists, hikers and equestrians. The trail map is based on the "Riding and Hiking Trails" map provided by County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (see Map 2-3).

The San Gabriel River Bike Trail also threads its way under a variety of bridges, including freeway, major street, railway and pedestrian bridges. The bridge names are noted below within each reach.

**Headwaters and San Gabriel Canyon (Reaches 1 and 2)**

**Trails**

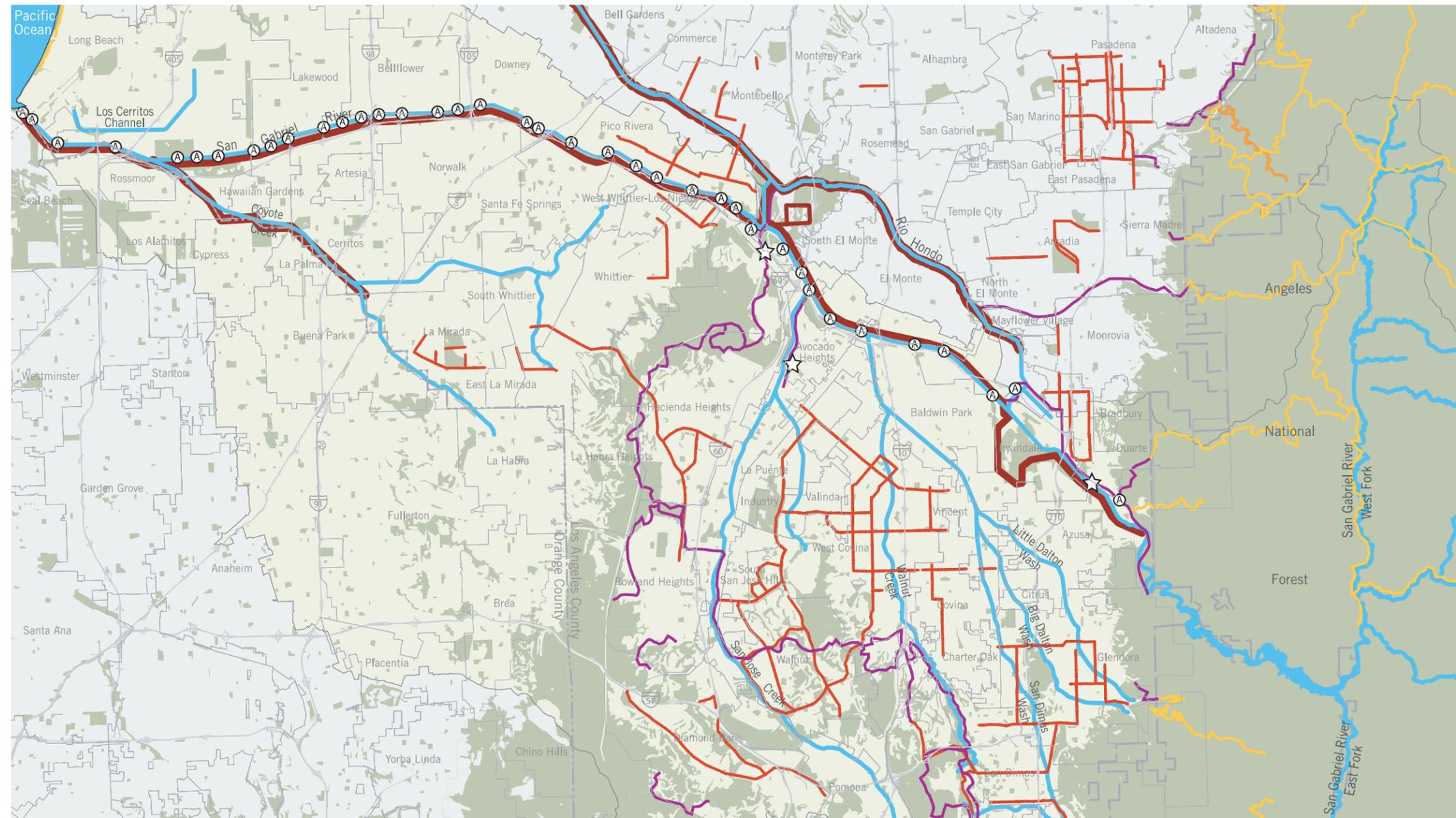
- West Fork North Trail—8 miles from Highway 39 to Cogswell Dam (rated difficult); trail may still be closed because of security considerations

**Bridges**

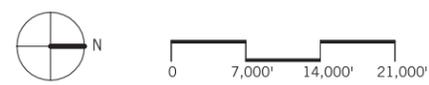
- San Gabriel Canyon Road/California Highway 39
- East Fork Road



Figure 2-42. The East Fork Road bridge spans the river in the San Gabriel Canyon.



MAP PREPARED BY MIG, INC. — DECEMBER 2003



Source: County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works and Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

- San Gabriel River and tributaries
- San Gabriel River Watershed
- Parks and open space
- Multi-purpose river trails
- Bike trails - Class 2 and 3
- Mountain bike trails
- Los Angeles County trails
- Forest trails
- A Access points
- ☆ Staging areas

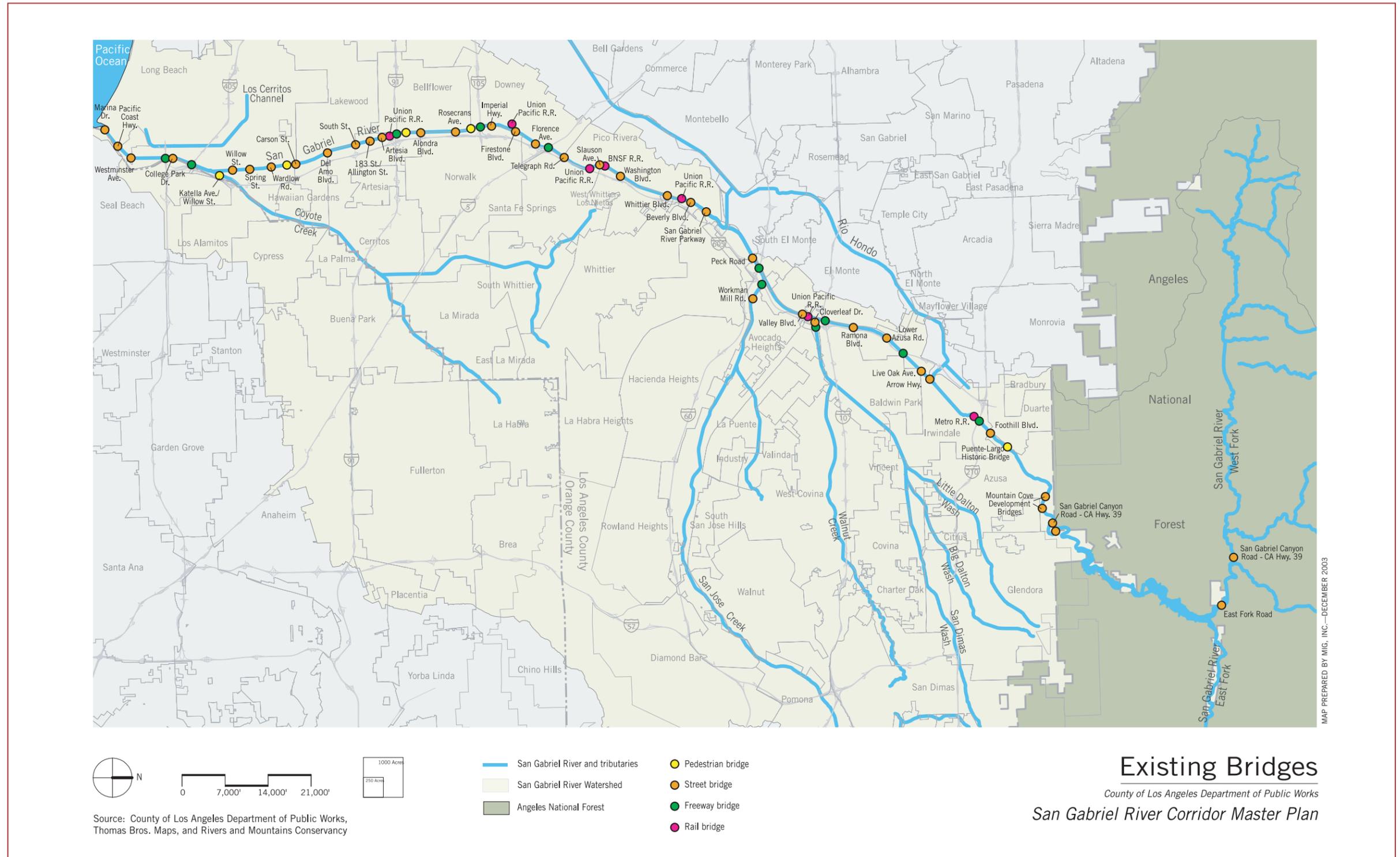
Note: Trails in Los Angeles County only. Data derived from RMC database and County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, "Los Angeles County Riding and Hiking Trails" map, 2001.

## Existing Los Angeles County Trails

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works

*San Gabriel River Corridor Master Plan*

Map 2-3. Existing Los Angeles County trails.



Map 2-4. Existing bridges.

**Upper San Gabriel Valley (Reach 3)**

**Trails**

- Van Tassel Trail—3.5 miles from start of San Gabriel River Bike Trail to Fish Canyon (rated moderately difficult)
- San Gabriel River Bike Trail (first leg)—Trailhead for 38-mile trail begins on east side; located near Angeles National Forest Entrance Station in Azusa; includes staging area; one-mile extension is currently being built past Mountain Cove development to future River Park (rated not difficult)
  - 8.5 miles along the east bank of the river from trailhead to bottom of Santa Fe Dam
  - Two designated access points along this reach: Trailhead and Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area

**Bridges**

- San Gabriel Canyon Road/Highway 39 (two bridges)
- Mountain Cove (two bridges)
- Puente-Largo Historic Railroad
- Foothill Boulevard
- Foothill Freeway
- Metro Railroad

**Lower San Gabriel Valley (Reach 4)**

**Trails**

- San Gabriel River Bike Trail (second leg)
  - 8.5 miles on the west bank of the river from Santa Fe Dam to Whittier Narrows Dam
  - 11 designated access points along the reach
- San Jose Creek Bike Trail—2.0-mile east-west trail that ends where it intersects the San Gabriel River Bike Trail at the San Jose Creek confluence; this trail is proposed to extend to Cal Poly Pomona and beyond to Claremont (rated not difficult)
- Schabarum Trail—28-mile trail that begins at the San Gabriel River in Whittier Narrows; extends eastward through the Puente Chino Hills toward La Habra Heights



Figure 2-43. Trail access from the community of Avocado Heights leads to the equestrian trail on the north bank of San Jose Creek.

- Link to Lario (Rio Hondo) Trail—A significant east-west trail that connects the San Gabriel River Bike Trail to the Rio Hondo Trail, which travels north to Monrovia and south to the LA River Bike Trail, which continues south to Long Beach and the Pacific Ocean

**Bridges**

- Arrow Highway
- Live Oak Avenue
- San Gabriel River Freeway (605 Freeway)
- Lower Azusa Road
- Ramona Boulevard
- San Bernardino Freeway (10 Freeway)
- Cloverleaf Drive
- Union Pacific (MetroLink)
- San Gabriel River Freeway (605 Freeway)
- Valley Boulevard
- Workman Mill Road
- San Gabriel River Freeway (605 Freeway)
- Pomona Freeway (60 Freeway)
- Peck Road

**Upper Coastal Plain (Reach 5)**

**Trails**

- San Gabriel River Bike Trail (third leg)
  - 7.5 miles on the east bank of the river from Whittier Narrows to Firestone Boulevard in Downey
  - 9 designated access points
  - Currently no major east-west trail connections except the recently completed Whittier Greenway Trail rails-to-trails project

**Bridges**

- San Gabriel River Parkway
- Beverly Boulevard
- Union Pacific Rail
- Whittier Boulevard
- Washington Boulevard
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (MetroLink)
- Slauson Avenue
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Telegraph Road
- Santa Ana Freeway
- Florence Avenue
- Firestone Boulevard



Figure 2-44. The Union Pacific Railroad Bridge is being converted to the new West Branch Greenway, a rails-to-trails project by the City of Bellflower.

**Lower Coastal Plain (Reach 6)**

**Trails**

- San Gabriel River Bike Trail (fourth leg)
  - 10 miles on the east bank of the river from Firestone Boulevard in Downey to the San Diego Freeway, I-405
  - 13 designated access points
- Coyote Creek Bike Trail
  - Begins at the San Gabriel River Bike Trail and heads northeast toward La Mirada in Orange County

**Bridges**

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| ■ Imperial Highway                       | ■ South Street                  |
| ■ Glenn Anderson Freeway (I-105 Freeway) | ■ Del Amo Boulevard             |
| ■ Rosecrans Avenue                       | ■ Carson Street                 |
| ■ Alondra Boulevard                      | ■ Wardlow Road                  |
| ■ Artesia Freeway                        | ■ Spring Street                 |
| ■ Union Pacific Railroad                 | ■ Willow Street                 |
| ■ Artesia Boulevard                      | ■ Pedestrian bridge (4 bridges) |
| ■ 183rd Street/Allington Street          |                                 |



Figure 2-45. The bridge at Foster Road on the Downey-Bellflower-Norwalk border is one of the four pedestrian bridges in Reach 6.

**Zone of Tidal Influence (Reach 7)**

**Trails**

- San Gabriel River Bike Trail (fifth leg)
  - 3.5 miles on the east bank through Orange County to the Pacific coast in Seal Beach
  - 4 designated access points

**Bridges**

- |                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ■ San Diego Freeway (I-605 Freeway) | ■ Westminster Avenue    |
| ■ College Park Drive                | ■ Pacific Coast Highway |
| ■ 22 Freeway Bridge                 | ■ Marina Drive          |

**EQUESTRIAN TRAILS**

The river has many areas of significant equestrian activity, especially from Reaches 3 through 6. Specific areas include Azusa, Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area, Whittier Narrows Dam Recreation Area, Pico Rivera, Bellflower and Lakewood.

An equestrian trail parallels the Bike Trail along many portions of the river, but many other trails frequently used by equestrians have not yet been



Figure 2-46. Marina Drive Bridge is the southern-most bridge that crosses the river, on the Long Beach-Seal Beach border.



Figure 2-47. Picnic shelters in the Santa Fe Dam Recreation area are well-used.

mapped. The Trail Documentation Project of the San Gabriel River Equestrian Coalition will inventory equestrian trails in the river corridor.

**Parks, Schools, and Open Space**

This set of maps (Maps 2-5 and Map 2-6) details information about existing parks and open space along the San Gabriel River. In addition to specific parks and natural areas designated as open space, this section also identifies schools, another potential source of recreational and open space, and utility rights-of-way, a functional element of infrastructure which provides some open space value.

**REGIONAL PARKS**

About 52 public parks and recreation areas of all sizes lie within or near the river corridor. The largest of these, the Angeles National Forest, is in the San Gabriel Mountains. Three other large regional parks are fairly evenly dispersed along the urbanized portion of the San Gabriel River corridor linked by the bike trail. This includes: the Santa Fe Dam



Figure 2-48. This lake, one of the six lakes in El Dorado Regional Park, provides visual relief and a sense of serenity.

Recreation Area in the northern section; the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area in the middle section, and El Dorado Regional Park along the southern portion.

**ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST.** 701 N. Santa Anita Ave., Arcadia (Forest Supervisor's Office, located outside the forest)

Managed by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, this national forest covers over 650,000 acres, including the headwaters of the San Gabriel River. A diverse wild land area lying above the metropolitan area of Los Angeles, the park provides a wide range of recreational activities including hiking, backpacking, camping, picnicking, fishing, off-highway vehicle use, gold-panning, swimming and other water sports.

**SANTA FE DAM RECREATION AREA.** 15501 E. Arrow Highway, Irwindale

Operated by County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, this 836-acre park includes a 70-acre lake for sailing, swimming, and fishing; trails for biking and hiking; the Peter Schabarum Nature Center; picnic areas; and campsites for youth groups. A popular children's water area is a distinctive feature. North of the lake is a 400-acre natural area. The San Gabriel River Bike Trail runs through the park from the San Gabriel Mountains to the coast.

**WHITTIER NARROWS DAM RECREATION AREA.** 823 Lexington-Gallatin Road, South El Monte

Operated by County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation and the City of Pico Rivera, this 1,400-acre park provides fishing lakes,

picnic areas, playgrounds, an equestrian facility, trails, multi-purpose athletic complex, a military museum, soccer fields, volleyball courts, and archery, skeet, pistol and trap ranges. The park also features the Whittier Narrows Nature Center, which includes over 200 acres of natural woodland and four lakes for migrating waterfowl.

**EL DORADO REGIONAL PARK.** 7550 E. Spring Street, Long Beach

Operated by the City of Long Beach, this 470-acre park is bordered on the west by the San Gabriel River and on the east by the I-605 Freeway. The park includes the El Dorado Nature Center, community gardens, Olympic archery range, six lakes and several streams, picnic areas, play equipment, a children's train, a group campground, over 4 miles of bike trails, a glider flying area, and model sailboat area.

Although the regional parks are strategically spaced along the river corridor, the remaining parks and open spaces, as illustrated by the map, are not as evenly distributed. While most of the river-adjacent communities have parks within walking distance of the river (66 percent along the west bank and 80 percent along the east bank), some communities lack this open space resource. Gaps in the distribution of parks along the river include densely populated communities such as Baldwin Park and El Monte in Reach 4, Pico Rivera and West Whittier-Los Nietos in Reach 5, and portions of Bellflower in Reach 6.



Figure 2-49. The river itself is open space—and a highly used recreation area in the Angeles National Forest for millions of visitors every year.

**LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS**

The map identifies specific parks by name and illustrates them by size (see Map 2-5). It includes the regional parks described above and the many local parks usually managed by cities. Parks are categorized by size:

- Large: greater than 50 acres
- Medium: 15 to 50 acres
- Small: less than 15 acres

The parks illustrated on the map are listed below by Reach. All these parks lie within one-half mile of the river. An asterisk (\*) indicates all parks that are directly adjacent to the river.

**Headwaters (Reach 1)**

The following three “parks” are campgrounds that lie within the Angeles National Forest just below the headwaters of the San Gabriel River and to the west of the Cogswell Dam Reservoir.

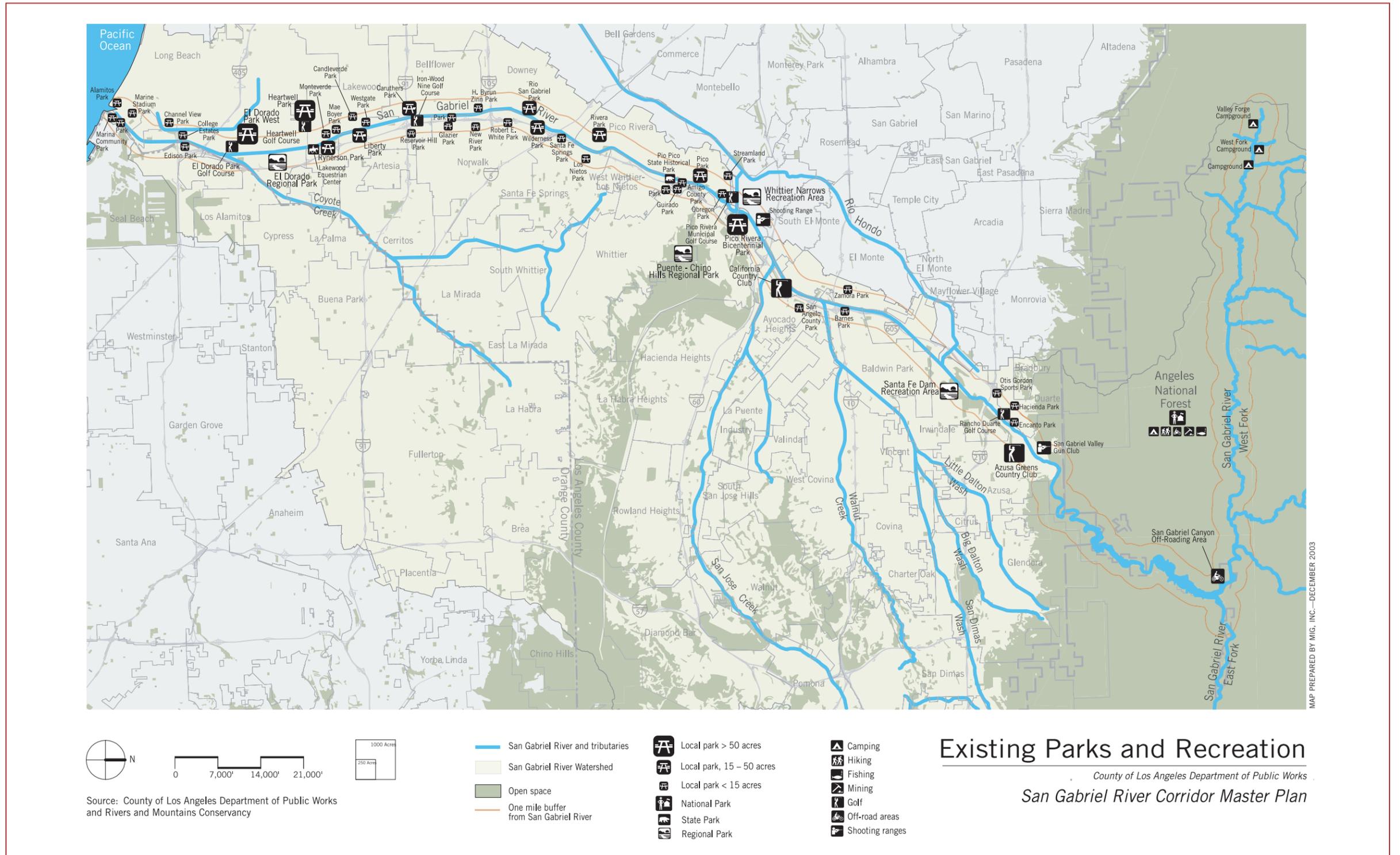
- Valley Forge Campground
- West Fork Campground
- Campground

**San Gabriel Canyon (Reach 2)**

- San Gabriel Canyon Off-Highway Vehicle Area



Figure 2-50. Off-road vehicles drivers obtain day-use permits from the US Forest Service for designated areas in San Gabriel Canyon.



Map 2-5. Existing parks and recreational facilities.

**Upper San Gabriel Valley (Reach 3)**

Except for the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area, none of these parks is oriented toward the nearby river.

- Azusa Greens Country Club, Azusa
- Encanto Park, Duarte
- Hacienda Park, Duarte
- Rancho Duarte Golf Course, Duarte
- Otis Gordon Sport Park, Duarte
- Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area\*, Irwindale (regional park—see description above)

**Lower San Gabriel Valley (Reach 4)**

This reach lacks parks, most notably in the central and northern portion. The parks that do exist are usually not adjacent to river or are separated from it by the I-605 Freeway.

- Barnes Park, Baldwin Park
- Zamora Park, El Monte
- San Angelo County Park, Bassett
- California Country Club, City of Industry
- Pico Rivera Bicentennial Park\*, Pico Rivera
- Whittier Narrows Recreation Area\*, Pico Rivera (regional park—see description above)



Figure 2-51. Legg Lake at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area is a popular weekend destination for families.



Figure 2-52. Santa Fe Springs Park includes a playground and active recreation, and will expand to include a nature sanctuary.

**Upper Coastal Plain (Reach 5)**

Compared with Reaches 3 and 4, Reach 5 has significantly more parks. All of these parks are 15 acres or less, but many are notable for lying directly adjacent to the river. They are linked by the San Gabriel River Bike Trail, which runs down the east bank of the river. This trend begins at the southern end of Reach 4 with the Bicentennial Park in Pico Rivera. Although generally well covered with small parks, there is one notable gap in the central portion of Reach 5, between Pio Pico State Historic Park and Los Nietos Park.

- Pico Rivera Municipal Golf Course\*
- Obregon Park\*, Pico Rivera
- Streamland Park, Pico Rivera
- Pico Park, Pico Rivera
- Amigo County Park\*, Pico Rivera
- Guirado Park, LA County
- Pio Pico State Historic Park, Pico Rivera
- Rivera Park, Pico Rivera
- Los Nietos Park, Santa Fe Springs
- Santa Fe Springs Park\*, Santa Fe Springs
- Wilderness Park\*, Downey
- Rio San Gabriel Park\*, Downey

**Lower Coastal Plain (Reach 6)**

Reach 6 has the largest number of parks and the most diverse sizes. Although most are less than 15 acres, there are also medium-size parks, as well as one large regional park.

- Robert E. White Park, Norwalk
- New River Park, Norwalk
- H. Byrun Zinn Park\*, Bellflower
- Glazier Park, Norwalk
- Iron-Wood Nine Hole Golf Course, Cerritos
- Caruthers Park\*, Bellflower
- Westgate Park\*, Cerritos
- Liberty Park\*, Cerritos
- Candleverde Park, Lakewood
- Mae Boyer Park\*, Lakewood
- Rynerson Park\*, Lakewood
- Monteverde Park, Lakewood
- Lakewood Equestrian Center, Lakewood
- Heartwell Golf Course, Long Beach
- Heartwell Park, Long Beach
- El Dorado Regional Park\*, Long Beach (regional park—see description above)
- El Dorado Park West, Long Beach
- El Dorado Park Golf Course\*, Long Beach



Figure 2-53. The Lakewood Equestrian Center serves an active equestrian community.

**Zone of Tidal Influence (Reach 7)**

This relatively short reach has only a few public parks.

- Edison Park\*, Seal Beach
- College Estates Park\*, Long Beach
- Channel View Park, Long Beach
- Gum Grove Park, Seal Beach
- Marina Community Park, Seal Beach
- Alamitos Park, Long Beach



Figure 2-54. A kite surfer heads toward the mouth of the river at Seal Beach.

**OPEN SPACE**

Open space along the river is relatively sparse, compared with the parks that provide more active recreational opportunities. The map shows parks in bright green and open spaces in soft green, illustrating locations with active versus passive recreational opportunities (see Map 2-6). Open space includes undeveloped natural areas, as well as vacant lands, and is usually in public ownership. The largest open space groupings lie in the mountains and hills. The most notable open space includes:

- Angeles National Forest
- Foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains
- Natural areas adjacent to the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area
- Woodland Duck Farm property
- Whittier Narrows
- Puente-Chino Hills
- Wetland areas in Seal Beach and Long Beach

However, not all of the open spaces illustrated on the map are necessarily protected from future development. This is especially true for the open space areas in or near the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, some of which is privately held. A portion of the open space data set used to generate this map includes land designated as vacant, which provides an opportunity for future parks or protected open space.

**SCHOOLS**

In addition to existing parks and open space, schools and utility rights-of-way offer additional significant forms of open space along the river. Public schools can be a key element in the creation of additional open space opportunities for some communities. When school properties are added to the map of parks and open space, the network of open space is tightened, with less distance remaining between open spaces.

The communities that lack parks and open space do have local schools. Dual use of these properties may provide more available parks and open space. Public schools in or near the river corridor are present in all the reaches south of the Santa Fe Dam, beginning with Reach 4. An asterisk (\*) indicates public schools that are located directly adjacent to the river.

**Headwaters, San Gabriel Canyon and Upper San Gabriel Valley (Reaches 1, 2 and 3)**

There are no schools located along the San Gabriel River in these upper reaches.

**Lower San Gabriel Valley (Reach 4)**

- Continuation High School, El Monte
- Elementary School 1, El Monte
- Elementary School 2, El Monte
- Madrid Middle School\*, City of Industry (significant river frontage)

- Mountain View High School\*, El Monte (lies opposite from Woodland Duck Farm, with significant river frontage)
- Charles T. Kranz Intermediate, El Monte
- South El Monte High School, South El Monte (lies adjacent to Whittier Narrows Nature Center)

**Upper Coastal Plain (Reach 5)**

- Pico Rivera Middle School, Beverly Boulevard, Pico Rivera (adjacent to Pico Park)
- Middle School, Norwalk Boulevard, LA County
- Continuation High School, Passons Boulevard, Pico Rivera
- Middle School, Passons Boulevard, Pico Rivera
- Elementary School, Passons Boulevard, Pico Rivera
- Pioneer High School, LA County
- Middle School 2, Pico Rivera

**Lower Coastal Plain (Reach 6)**

- Ernie Pyle Elementary, Rosecrans Avenue, Bellflower
- Bellflower High School, Bellflower
- Elementary School 2, Del Amo Boulevard, Lakewood
- Demille Middle School\*, Long Beach (river adjacent near El Dorado Regional Park)

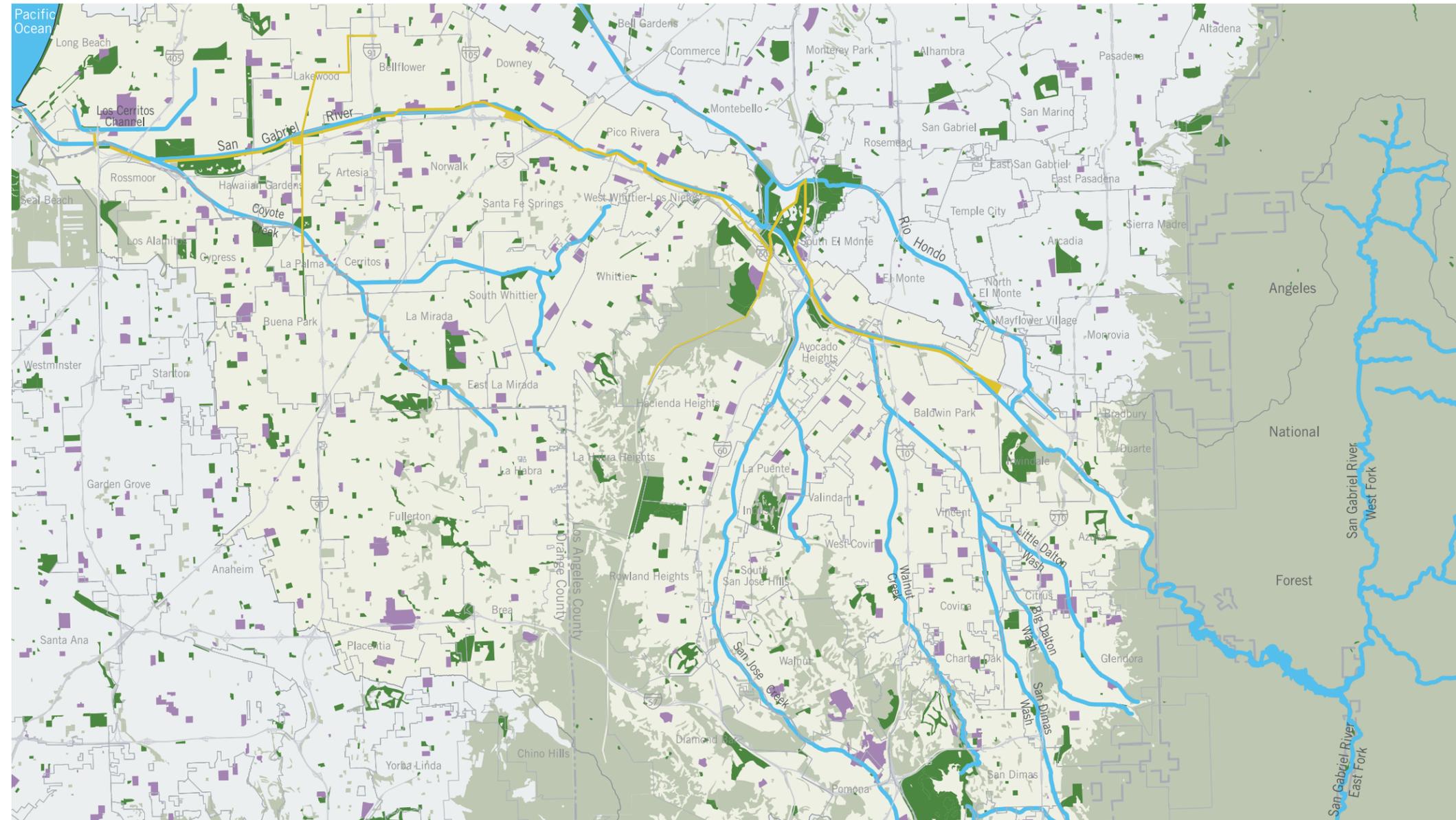
**Zone of Tidal Influence (Reach 7)**

- Middle School, Iroquois Avenue, Long Beach (adjacent to Los Cerritos Channel)

**UTILITY RIGHTS-OF-WAY**

Utility rights-of-way and easements provide a long corridor of relatively open land running parallel to and within the river corridor.

Southern California Edison (SCE) owns or leases 85 percent of a continuous strip of land that runs primarily along the east side of the river. Beginning just below the Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale and continuing to the electrical power facilities in Seal Beach (below the confluence with Coyote Creek), most of the SCE property is not built upon. The SCE corridor deviates only once from this linear pattern, when it jags sharply to the west



MAP PREPARED BY MIG, INC.—DECEMBER 2003



Source: County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works and Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

- San Gabriel River and tributaries
- Schools (Pre-K, K-6, 7-8, 9-12)
- Parks and recreation
- San Gabriel River Watershed
- Open space
- SCE easements

## Existing Open Space

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works  
*San Gabriel River Corridor Master Plan*

Map 2-6. Existing open space.



Figure 2-55. The West San Gabriel Open Space Park in Lakewood makes good use of a utility right-of-way.

of the river in the Whittier Narrows area and then back again across the river to the eastern bank. Along several stretches of the river, cities have established agreements enabling them to build parks within the SCE right-of-way. The LA Department of Water and Power also owns and leases land along the San Gabriel River.

**Flood Protection**

Beginning in the 1930s, the San Gabriel River was engineered through a series of dams and levees to provide water and flood protection. To manage flooding and water storage, the river channel was made deeper and narrower. This flood protection allowed safe urban development almost to the river's edge. For years, the river has done its job so well that it has allowed many people simply to forget about it as it silently runs through the entire valley. The map shows the location of all flood control facilities on the San Gabriel River, including flood control channels and dams (see Map 2-7).

**DAMS**

Three major dams in the upper watershed provide flood protection and store water for use in the Los Angeles metropolitan region.

**COGSWELL DAM AND RESERVOIR.** Owned by the Flood Control District and operated by LADPW, it was completed in April 1934 at a cost of \$3.1

million. It is a rock-filled structure with a concrete cutoff wall and rises 255 feet above the original stream bottom. Used both for flood control and water conservation, Cogswell Dam is located 22 miles north of Azusa in San Gabriel Canyon.

**SAN GABRIEL DAM AND RESERVOIR.** Owned by the Flood Control District and operated by LADPW, construction began in 1932 and finished in 1939 at a cost of \$17 million. It is a compacted, earth-filled and rock-filled dam with a concrete cutoff wall, standing 310 feet above the original



Figure 2-56. The cuts in the slopes show the source material used to construct the San Gabriel Dam.

streambed 7 miles north of Azusa. It is 1,500 feet long at its crest. It is used for flood control and water conservation.

**MORRIS DAM AND RESERVOIR.** Built by the City of Pasadena, Morris Dam was completed in May 1934 at a cost of \$7.6 million. It was later relinquished to the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California, and, in 1995, it was transferred to LADPW. It is a concrete, partially arched gravity structure, 800-foot long, rising 245 feet above the original streambed, a few miles below the San Gabriel Dam. Its primary purpose is water conservation.

**SANTA FE DAM.** This is a compacted earth-fill dam owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It rises 92 feet in height and spans 23,800 feet in length at the crest. In the upper portion of the reservoir is the Santa Fe Spreading Grounds.



Figure 2-57. Most of the drainage above Morris Dam is steeply sloped.



Figure 2-58. The upstream side of the Santa Fe Dam dominates the area.