



State, federal partners announce new funding to boost cleanup at L.A. County national monument

Grant will improve access and water quality at recently expanded San Gabriel Mountains site and enhance key Southern California water source

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LOS ANGELES – Shortly after the 10-year anniversary of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument being established, and just months after it was [expanded](#) by President Joe Biden, federal, state, tribal and local partners came together today to celebrate a **\$3.5 million investment** to help improve access and water quality on the East Fork of the San Gabriel River, a key Southern California water source and recreational site within the national monument.

The federal funding will help the Watershed Conservation Authority, USDA Forest Service, tribes and community groups conduct trash-removal projects, create new walking trails and install additional restrooms, protecting a watershed that provides Los Angeles County with one-third of its water supply.

Through its [Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program](#), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provides funding to the State Water Resources Control Board to support California projects that reduce [nonpoint source pollution](#). From this funding, the State Water Board awarded an initial \$1.5 million grant for the San Gabriel project and is planning an additional \$2 million investment over the next three years.

The popular stretch of the San Gabriel River is used primarily for recreation by surrounding underserved communities. The area also flows through the national monument, which received more than 4.5 million visitors in 2021. This intense level of use, especially on peak days, can lead to excess trash and other management challenges.

“President Biden’s recent expansion of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument protects this area of historic, cultural, and scientific importance to our nation, and also increases equitable access to our public lands and the many benefits that nature provides,” said **Brenda Mallory, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality**. “This new investment will help support a safe, fun, and accessible visitor experience for local communities.”

“People exploring the beautiful national monument or hiking and swimming in the river should not be greeted by piles of trash,” said **E. Joaquin Esquivel, State Water Board chair**. “We’re thrilled to collaborate with federal, tribal and local partners on this multi-benefit project that not only safeguards water quality, but also supports equitable access to outdoor recreation.”

Trash in the San Gabriel and along its riverbanks is a long-standing concern, and in 2000, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board [approved](#) the state’s first total maximum daily load, or maximum amount of a pollutant allowed in a waterbody, for trash in the river’s East Fork. The U.S. Forest Service, which manages the national monument, has collaborated with dozens of partners to [address these challenges](#) to support safe, fun, and accessible visitor experiences and protect fragile and unique resources. Statewide, trash is a significant pollutant of waterways, posing a threat to aquatic life, drinking water supplies and public health. Several regional water quality control boards have adopted trash control plans or permits, and [in 2015](#), the State Water Board approved a statewide water quality objective aimed at reducing the amount of trash reaching waterways.

The funding managed by the State Water Board’s [Nonpoint Source Grant Program](#) will support the [Cattle Canyon Improvement Plan](#), a multi-phase project that will enhance river access, protect fragile forest and riparian habitat and improve conditions for sensitive species, including the endangered Santa Ana sucker. Construction on the project’s first phase is expected to start in January 2025 and will include an access trail and stairs to the riverbank, native plant restoration, increased trash bins and dumpsters and an asphalt parking lot.

Randy Moore, chief of USDA Forest Service: “These new investments will help us create a healthier watershed and provide more enjoyable experiences on Forest Service lands. We appreciate all of the hard work from our partners. This work embodies the importance of partnerships in helping us provide public access while also protecting the cultural and natural attributes that make the San Gabriel so special and unique.”

Anthony Morales, Tribal Chairman of the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians (Gabrieleno/Tongva): “We are very grateful to Presidents Obama and Biden for the designations of our ancestral lands as a national monument area, but resources to preserve these lands are needed as well. Today, we are glad to be able to celebrate this grant, which will provide the funding necessary to preserve and beautify the East Fork of the San Gabriel River and bring about many benefits for the river, the surrounding environment and all who rely on it.”

Tribal President Rudy Ortega Jr., Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians: “We applaud the federal government’s investment in supporting our state’s water agency to improve the water quality of the San Gabriel River. This funding is crucial for preserving the health of our waterways, ensuring sustainable water resources, and

protecting the ecosystems that have been sacred to our people for generations. It demonstrates a strong commitment to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and the communities it serves.”

Mark Stanley, executive officer for Watershed Conservation Authority: “The development of the Oaks Access at the East Fork of the San Gabriel River is a key element of the WCA's mission. It reflects our commitment to collaborating with the U.S. Forest Service and community partners to create accessible and environmentally sustainable watersheds and green spaces.”

Belén Bernal, executive director for Nature for All: "Nature for All celebrates the future recreational and ecological restoration improvement projects at the East Fork of the San Gabriel River. We look forward to continuing to promote stewardship amongst our community base, and support additional steps to ensure that visitors, especially those suffering the most from the impacts of climate change, are met with a dignified and safe visitor experience while visiting our local forest and public lands.”

For more information on the State Water Board’s trash control programs, visit the board’s [website](#).