



The City Project * Anahuak Youth Sports Association * A3PCON (Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council) * Robert Bracamontes Yu'wa'tal A'lla-mal (Black Crow) Acjachemen Nation, Juaneño Tribe * Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles * Latino Coalition for a Healthy California * National Parks Conservation Association * Natural Resources Defense Council * Multicultural Communities for Mobility * Search To Involve Pilipino Americans * SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center)

Health and Environmental Justice in the Proposed San Gabriel National Recreation Area

Congresswoman Judy Chu has emphasized public health and environmental justice as two of the main reasons why the region needs a national recreation area in the San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains: “Los Angeles is the most park-poor region in the United States. New York City has more park space than L.A. Lack of recreational opportunities – large or small – has severe impacts on urban populations struggling with obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and chronic illness. Opportunities to enjoy outdoor activity are vital for public health and the well being of people of all ages and walks of life.” We agree!

A diverse and growing alliance of committed advocates for equal justice, public health, and green space, working with the San Gabriel Mountains Forever campaign and others, have submitted public comments in support of fully-funded balanced, comprehensive legislation to designate a National Recreation Area, wilderness, and wild and scenic rivers with access for all. **The planned legislation should consider the impact on all communities, including communities of color and low-income communities, to ensure the benefits of a National Recreation Area are distributed fairly. It should analyze green access, health justice, active living, local green jobs, and impacts on people, as well as environmental impacts.**

President Barack Obama’s America’s Great Outdoors initiative designates the greening of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers as one of the nation’s top 101 priorities. The National Park Service (NPS) has published multiple studies on green access; human health; disparities based on race, color, national origin, or income; and the responsibility of park agencies to help address those concerns.

Indeed, the New York Times published a front page article on NPS’s efforts to appeal to people of color. According to the September 6, 2013, Times article:

Only about one in five visitors to a national park site is nonwhite, according to a 2011 University of Wyoming report commissioned by the Park Service, and only about 1 in 10 is Hispanic - a particularly lackluster embrace by the nation’s fastest-growing demographic group. . . .

[T]he reality that going to a [national] park, at least for now, means encountering mostly white people is its own potential barrier. Research by the Park Service says some members of minority groups have said they fear they would feel unwelcome.

The planned legislation presents a tremendous opportunity to implement a national best practice example for health and environmental justice for all. Comprehensive legislation will enable all the people of the region and beyond to have equal access to green space and places for healthy recreation. We look forward to continuing to work with Congress and communities to seek equal justice, democracy, and livability for all.

Equal Justice, Democracy, and Livability for All

Board: Chris Burrows Juan Devis Robert García Tom Hayden
Robbie LaBelle Lyndon Parker Michael Rodriguez

The City Project is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization and a Project of Community Partners

We present the following recommendations for legislation to designate a National Recreation Area, wilderness, and wild and scenic rivers with access for all.

1. Ensure compliance by the federal agencies -- including the National Park Service and the Department of Interior, and by recipients of federal financial assistance -- with equal protection laws and principles to ensure equal access to the National Recreation Area and its benefits.
2. Include a compliance, equity, and environmental justice analysis and implementation plan that addresses the impact of the designation on all communities, including communities of color and low-income communities, and ensures equal access to the National Recreation Area and its benefits.
3. Conduct a health impact assessment for the National Recreation Area.
4. Promote economic vitality through green jobs programs for diverse youth and other local residents.
5. Serve diverse needs and the full range of values at stake through a fully-funded, balanced alternative that includes multi-benefit park and green space projects that promote: healthy active and passive outdoor recreation; clean water, land, and air; urban habitat; and climate justice.
6. Study, celebrate, and preserve cultural, heritage, public art, and Native American resources to reflect the diversity of the region and the nation.
7. Provide transportation alternatives for green access to the National Recreation Area, including bike trails, complete green streets, safe routes to school, and Transit to Trails that takes urban residents on fun, educational, and healthy river, mountain, and beach trips.
8. Ensure full and fair participation by all communities in the planning and decision making process.



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