



California News



Baxter Creek Gateway Park links the cities of El Cerrito and Richmond with a restored creek, detailed interpretive signs, multi-use trail and inviting gathering spaces. Inset: Ribbon cutting at the Gateway Park opening celebration. Photos: Melanie Mintz

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2008

Recent Successes

Baxter Creek Gateway Park

In 1997 this 1.64 acre vacant lot in the City of El Cerrito was being eyed by the adjacent grocery store owners as a likely place for an expansion project--but not for long. A feisty group of neighbors pointed out that this “vacant lot” was actually alive with frogs and other critters living in the remnants of Baxter Creek. The site also marked the northern terminus of the 8-mile Ohlone Greenway that traced an abandoned railroad easement through three East Bay Cities. The easement continued through the site, across the street and into the next city to the north—Richmond. The neighbors formed Friends of Baxter Creek, succeeded in deflecting the development project and eventually won a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy to enable the city to purchase the land.

At that point the City and the Friends of Baxter Creek along with a local non-profit, the Watershed Project, enlisted RTCA to help guide the community in developing a concept for the site. RTCA helped plan and lead participatory workshops that developed and prioritized ideas for the site that included creek restoration, a trail, interpretive elements and public gathering spaces. Building on these conceptual plans, the city obtained additional design and construction grants to complete this multi-purpose gateway park.



CURRENT PROJECTS

Find out about each project starting on page 2

Current Projects



Canal Community Gardens and Trails, Starkweather Shoreline Park, San Rafael.
Photo: Teri Vyenielo Rockas.

1. Antelope Valley Trails

Location: Antelope Valley including communities of Palmdale, Lancaster, and Quartz Hill in northwest Los Angeles County

Partner: Antelope Valley Conservancy
RTCA Contact: Jim Donovan

The Antelope Valley Conservancy envisions the development of a 200-mile trail system within a 1,000-square-mile planning area. RTCA is currently working with a core group of trail advocates to identify strategies towards meeting this goal. The planning process will be expanded and RTCA will facilitate a broader community planning process to include stakeholders, non-profit organizations, landowners, and city and county planning officials.

2. Brea Rail Trail

Location: City of Brea in Orange County

Partner: City of Brea
RTCA Contact: Jim Donovan

The City of Brea is working to convert an existing Union Pacific Railroad cor-

ridor into four-mile, 50-acre greenway that will traverse the city and connect to two regional trails. RTCA will help the city form a trail task force as part of a community-driven process. The group will collaborate with city officials, representatives of the various community groups, and the regional transportation authority.

3. Canal Community Gardens and Trails

Location: Canal neighborhood of San Rafael.

Partner: Healthy Marin Partnership
RTCA Contact: Peg Henderson

A broad range of community partners will implement a system of community/family gardens and connecting trails through the Canal neighborhood of

San Rafael as a way to create an environment that supports healthy choices. RTCA is assisting the collaborative with meeting facilitation, planning strategies and stakeholder involvement.

4. Coachella Valley Trails

Location: Coachella Valley, a 45-mile long valley in the western/central area of Riverside County that includes nine cities.

Partner: Coachella Valley Community Trails Alliance
RTCA Contact: Anne Dove

This new organization is helping to develop a Valley-wide trail network of over 50 miles in this rapidly-growing area of the state. RTCA is helping the Alliance develop a strategic plan, build partnerships, and engage the public.

5. Compton Creek Washington Elementary Natural Park

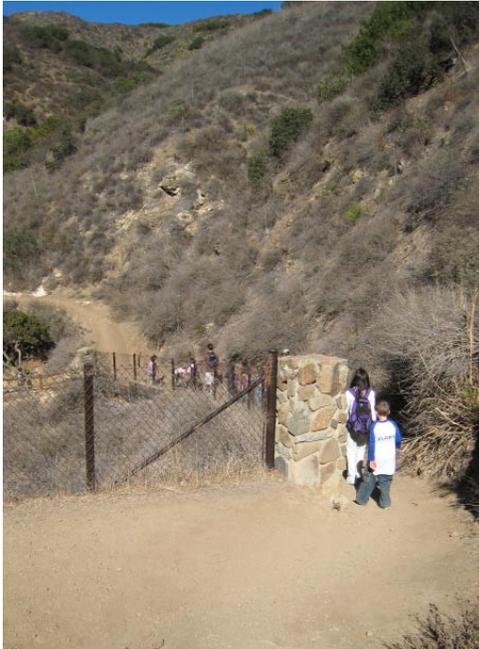
Location: City of Compton in Los Angeles County

Partner: Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (MRCA)
RTCA Contact: Jim Donovan

The MRCA is partnering with the City of Compton and the Compton Unified School District to convert a three-acre site located between an elementary school and Compton Creek into a public park with native riparian species and natural park amenities. The park will incorporate stormwater management elements and integrate nature in the urban environment. RTCA will support the project partner's design process by facilitating public workshops.

"The RTCA Program has been instrumental in helping Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area build valuable connections with local communities."

Woody Smeck, Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area



A school group on a fieldtrip to the Conejo Canyons. Photo: Anne Dove.

6. Conejo Canyons Conservation

Location: Northwest area of the City of Thousand Oaks in eastern Ventura County.

Partner: Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA)
RTCA Contact: Anne Dove

COSCA has assembled 3,100 acres of open space that will be open to the public with 23 miles of enhanced trails, 8 miles of new trails, and 7 miles of creek/riparian habitat enhancement. RTCA is assisting COSTA with planning and facilitation of public workshops to gather input for a management plan.

7. Great California Delta Trail

Location: Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta region

Partner: Delta Protection Commission
RTCA Contact: Suzanne Brinkley

The Delta Protection Commission and diverse partners are working to create a continuous recreation corridor throughout the Delta with a network of approximately 1,000 miles of bicycling and hiking trails with regional trail linkages and connections to the

Sacramento River, Bay Trail, and Delta parks. RTCA is assisting with policy and plan review and planning for a potential demonstration trail project.

8. Groundwork Richmond

Location: Richmond, CA
Partner: City of Richmond
RTCA Contact: Linda Stonier

A diverse Groundwork Richmond Steering Committee comprising representatives from parks and recreation, health, forestry, and public art agencies along with non-profits working on community-based food production, youth employment, and environmental education projects are undertaking a Feasibility Study/Strategic Plan that will evaluate whether to establish a Groundwork Trust in Richmond. The GW project grew out of efforts of the Friends of Richmond Greenway to encourage neighborhood use, development and stewardship of the Greenway.

9. Konocti Regional Trails

Location: Clear Lake region, Lake County.
Partner: County of Lake, Public Services
RTCA Contact: Barbara Rice

This project is a regional effort to create a network of ridgeline, shoreline, and waterways trails in and around Clear Lake linking parks, open space, communities, and the lakeshore. RTCA is facilitating development of a trails framework and advising on trail promotion and development, working with a team of agency and community partners.

10. Lake Tahoe Water Trail

Location: Lake Tahoe Basin in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California and Nevada
Partner: California Tahoe Conservancy
RTCA Contact: Barbara Rice

Kayaking on Lake Tahoe, jewel of the Sierra, known for its outstanding natural and recreational resources, is growing. Public agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin have come together to address management challenges in support of sustainable recreation in this fragile alpine ecosystem. RTCA is assisting a collaborative team of agencies, groups, and community stakeholders and supporting broader community engagement to further shared management, stewardship, and interpretation.



View of the Clear Lake ridgeline from Shannon Ridge Vineyards, Lake County.
Photo: Shannon Ridge Vineyards.

Current Projects cont.

11. Mather Vernal Pools Conservation

Location: West Sacramento, CA
Partner: Sacramento Splash
RTCA Contact: Linda Stonier

The Sacramento area environmental education program Sacramento Splash is working with Sacramento County Parks and RTCA to develop an interpretation and youth training program to allow responsible public access on trails to some 60 acres of rare and sensitive vernal pool habitat.

12. Pacoima Wash Greenway

Location: Northeast San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles County, CA
Partner: Pacoima Beautiful
RTCA Contact: Jim Donovan

Through a grant from Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Pacoima Beautiful is working to create a ten-mile greenway including a bicycle path, recreation trail, habitat restoration projects, and neighborhood parks along the existing flood protection facility. RTCA will work with the project proponents to coordinate community outreach and encourage community engagement in the planning process.

13. Petaluma River Access

Location: City of Petaluma in Sonoma County, San Francisco Bay Area
Partner: City of Petaluma
RTCA Contact: Barbara Rice

The Petaluma River is a valued community resource that brings together environmental, recreational, historical and economic assets that contribute to this small thriving community just north of San Francisco. Improved river access with hiking and bicycling trails, launching points, community amenities, and habitat improvements will expand Petaluma's recreational and economic potential. RTCA is assisting with an implementation and funding strategy, building partnerships and community investment.



Paddlers along the Petaluma River. Photo: Payette Caldwell

14. Randolph Street Community Trails

Location: Cities of Bell, Maywood, Vernon, Huntington Park
Partner: San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers & Mountains Conservancy (RMC)
RTCA Contact: Anne Dove

Located south of downtown Los Angeles, the communities along the Randolph Street corridor have limited open space and trail amenities. This project aims to create a 3.5-mile rail-with-trail corridor that connects to the Los Angeles River for recreation and non-motorized transportation uses. RTCA will assist the RMC and community in developing a vision and concept plan for the corridor.

15. Reagan Legacy Trail and Wildlife Corridor

Location: Southeastern Ventura County and northwestern Los Angeles County.
Partner: The Nature Conservancy
RTCA Contact: Anne Dove

The proposed landscape corridor will protect 700 acres of key wildlife habi-

tat that function as a major wildlife corridor while providing a 20-mile trail linking the Reagan Presidential Library to the historic Reagan Ranch in Malibu Creek State Park. RTCA is assisting partners with the assessment of project feasibility, compilation of existing conditions information; and development of outreach materials.

16. Rim of the Valley Trail

Location: Los Angeles County
Partner: Heritage Foundation: Los Angeles Trails Project
RTCA Contact: Jim Donovan

The Rim of the Valley is a 200-mile loop trail first conceptualized in 1978 to provide outdoor recreation and scenic vistas in the mountains and foothills surrounding the San Fernando Valley. RTCA is working with local trails activists and students to collect and compile trail data; coordinate trail mapping; create a database of planning efforts; and coordinate with stakeholders, local agencies, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to facilitate future implementation of this vision.

17. Santa Inés Mission National Historic Landmark Trails

Project: Santa Inés Mission National Historical Landmark Trails

Partner: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation

Location: Solvang

RTCA Contact: Sally Sheridan

The proposed recreational and interpretive trail system will link a National Historic Landmark District, the community of Solvang, a historic Mission, and a State Park providing increased recreational access to 95 acres of open space. RTCA is assisting with partnership building, organization development, and conceptual planning for the proposed Santa Inés Mission Mills State Historic Park.

18. Southern Laguna Watershed Creeks and Trails

Location: The Southern Laguna de Santa Rosa and the City of Rohnert Park, Sonoma County.

Partner: City of Rohnert Park

RTCA Contact: Peg Henderson

This project is focused on a 20-mile network of creeks with adjacent trails within southern Sonoma County. RTCA is helping to plan and conduct the public outreach and participation portion of the project, which also includes raising awareness of, and building support for, the creek resources.

19. Tolowa Coast Trails

Location: Del Norte County.

Partner: Tolowa Dunes Stewards

RTCA Contact: Linda Stonier

This project will result in increased access and protection for 11,000 acres of northern forest, freshwater ponds, coastal lagoon, beach, and dunes with varied ownership, including Tolowa Indian ancestral lands, through designation, connection, enhancement, interpretation, and coordinated management of hiking, biking, water, and

equestrian trails, including the California Coastal Trail. RTCA is providing assistance with interagency coordination and development of a new "Tolowa Trails Map and Access Guide."

20. Transit to Trails

Location: Southern California-wide

Partner: The City Project

RTCA Contact: Jim Donovan

This effort seeks to connect thousands of low-income children and family members in the urban Los Angeles area to local national and state parks. The Transit to Trails Project, RTCA, and representatives of other state and local park agencies will collaborate with park staff and transportation agencies to identify strategies to facilitate transit-based access to these areas.

21. Twentynine Palms Community Trails

Location: City of Twentynine Palms in San Bernardino County, CA

Partner: Morongo Basin Open Space Group & City of Twentynine Palms

RTCA Contact: Anne Dove

As part of a basin-wide open space effort, the City of Twentynine Palms seeks to create a 20+ mile trail network with regional connections to surrounding communities, Joshua Tree National Park, and the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. RTCA will assist in engaging the community and key stakeholders to assess trail opportunities and develop a trails planning process.

22. Verdugo Mountains & San Rafael Hills Trails

Location: Portions of Cities of Glendale, Burbank, Los Angeles, La Canada Flintridge and Pasadena

Partner: City of Glendale

RTCA Contact: Jim Donovan

In an effort to coordinate planning and management of a 30-mile trail network traversing more than 6,000 acres of open space, the City of Glendale is engaging neighboring jurisdictions, agencies and the public. RTCA assistance to this effort includes facilitation of interagency and public workshops and development of a report that summarizes strategies for achieving a more unified trail system.



Tolowa Coast area near Crescent City, California. Photo: Wendell Wood

We're Here For You.

Could your project could benefit from RTCA Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.

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THE RTCA PROGRAM

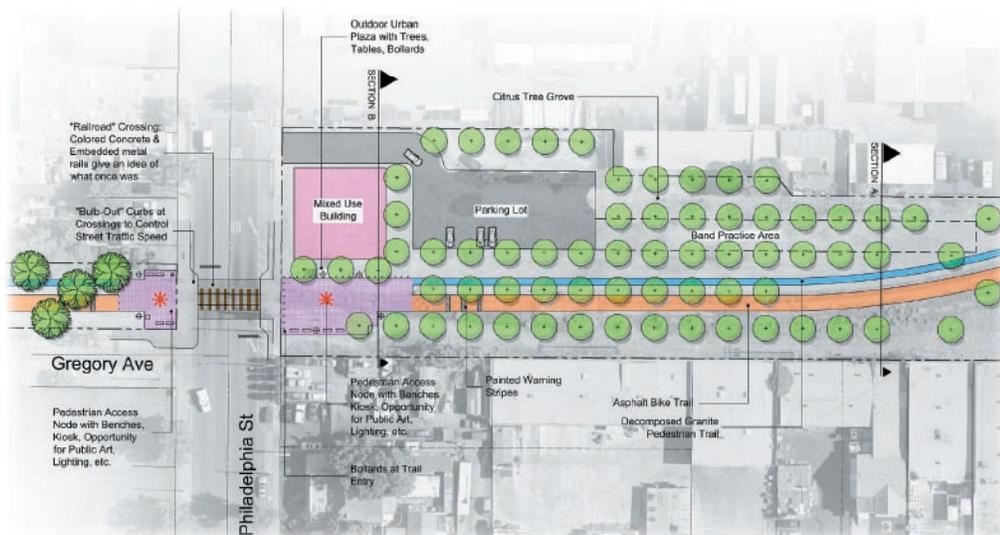
The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.

www.nps.gov/rtca



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Recent Successes cont.

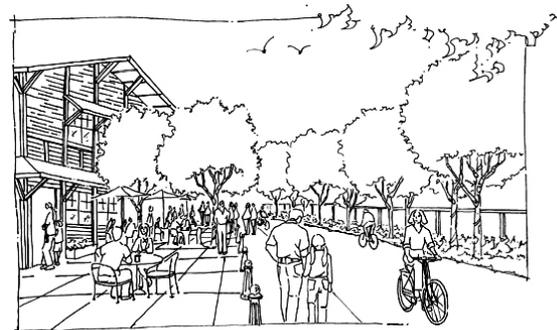


The "Station Stop" design concept for the Whittier Greenway was developed through the Art & Community Landscapes program, a partnership between the New England Foundation for the Arts and RTCA. The "Citrus Station" concept developed by artists Kathryn Miller and Andreas Hessian was translated into a site plan developed by the City's consultant, RRM Design Group.

Whittier Greenway's Making Tracks

What were once railroad tracks will soon be covered with bicycle and shoe tracks. Construction is nearing completion on the Whittier Greenway Trail, a 4.5-mile rail-trail corridor through the City of Whittier that links people to the area's natural and cultural heritage while providing safe, non-motorized transportation and recreation opportunities close to home. A former Union Pacific rail line that transported locally-produced citrus and avocado products, the corridor was purchased by the City and transformed with the help of the community, which provided extensive input into the planning and design process. The corridor, which traverses the entire city, connects neighborhoods to schools, parks, and commercial centers. Eventually, a final link will connect the greenway to the regional San Gabriel River Trail. Neighboring cities are also working to extend the greenway through their communities using the same historic Union Pacific right-of-way.

Through the National Park Service RTCA's Art & Community Landscapes effort, two local artists, Kathryn Miller and Andreas Hessian, developed a "station stop" design concept that will provide trail rest and staging areas based on themes and site elements that invoke the area's natural and cultural heritage. The City's consulting firm integrated this overarching concept into the final design of the greenway, and through the National Park Service's Challenge Cost Share program, the City was awarded \$30,000 to support construction of the station stops. The project received a design award from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the American Society of Landscape Architects for incorporating community character and art.



The Citrus Station, a major hub along the Whittier Greenway, will interpret the agricultural heritage of the city and serve as a gateway to the Uptown commercial district. Image: City of Whittier/RRM Design Group