

**LOS ANGELES RIVER RECREATIONAL USE RE-EVALUATION
(RECUR)
DRAFT WORK PLAN**



Photo courtesy of FOLAR Fish Study (2008)



Regional Board Field Survey(2003)



Photo Courtesy L A River Expedition (2008)

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
LOS ANGELES REGION**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. STUDY DESIGN – ASSESSMENT OF RECREATIONAL USES	6
2.1 FIELD MONITORING	6
2.2 DATA/INFORMATION COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	7
2.3 STAKEHOLDER RECREATIONAL USE SURVEYS.....	7
2.4 REVIEW OF PLANS FOR FUTURE RECREATIONAL USE.....	8
3. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION.....	9
4. FINAL REPORT	9
5. PROJECT SCHEDULE	10
ATTACHMENTS: FIELD SHEETS AND USER SURVEYS.....	11
<i>FIELD SHEET (1) RECONNAISSANCE</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>FIELD SHEET (2) USE SURVEY</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>USER SURVEY</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>ENCUESTA AL USUARIO.....</i>	<i>15</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

In addressing recreational use issues in engineered channels, the Regional Board recognizes that hydrologic modifications may limit, to varying degrees, the nature and extent of recreational opportunities supported by these waterbodies. At the same time, the Regional Board is aware of various efforts by local jurisdictions, non-profit organizations, and other interested parties to enhance the recreational opportunities in and around such modified streams. Therefore, the Regional Board is conducting a comprehensive re-evaluation of recreational uses in the engineered channels of the Los Angeles River watershed. The goal of the project is to document actual and potential recreational uses of engineered streams in the Los Angeles River watershed for the purpose of confirming or refuting their recreational use designations, for possible refinement or removal following this assessment.

Existing recreational uses will be assessed to determine the nature and extent of those uses that have occurred since November 28, 1975, and current and historical bacterial water quality since that date.

Potential recreational uses will be assessed based on Basin Plan considerations including but not limited to:

- Plans to put the water to such use (as documented in watershed and sub-watershed revitalization/management plans)
- Potential to put the water to such a use (e.g. current level of use, surrounding land use, current and future adjacent recreational facilities/programs, channel characteristics, current and future accessibility)
- Public desire to put the water to such future use (based on efforts by local agencies and environmental and other grassroots organizations).

Other considerations will include, but not be limited to: existing water quality, water quality potential, physical characteristics of the water body segment, proximity to residential areas, and public safety.

Stream segments designated for Intermittent recreational uses will be assessed to confirm the intermittent nature of their flow, and to determine whether the recreational uses are existing or potential in the manner described above.

The initial list of waterbodies to be evaluated is provided in Table 1. Their locations are shown in Figure 1. The list of engineered water body segments was developed by selecting the reaches named in the basin plan from the National Hydrography Dataset, then overlaying those reaches with the "open channel" layer from the Los Angeles County storm drain geodetic network to determine which segments were engineered. In areas where there were uncertainties the result was fine-tuned and discrepancies resolved by overlaying on top an aerial photograph from the Department of Fish and Game image server. Field verification will be conducted prior to finalizing the list.

This work plan is modeled after the recreational use assessment conducted by the Regional Board for Ballona Creek and Estuary (2003), with consideration of other use surveys conducted by the stakeholder organization - CREST (*Cleaner Rivers through Effective Stakeholder TMDLS*), and Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) in the Santa Ana Region. This document outlines an approach for the recreational use survey component of the re-evaluation. It will be released to the public for input and may be refined by Regional Board staff to incorporate stakeholder recommendations.

Relevant results from other recreational use surveys and related studies conducted in the Los Angeles River Watershed will be incorporated into this recreational use assessment. Regional Board staff have identified the following relevant studies:

- The Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council (LASGRWC) recently conducted a survey of REC-1 activities at specific locations in the Los Angeles River Watershed.
- USEPA conducted an evaluation of the entire mainstream of the Los Angeles River (2010) to determine the River's status as a Traditional Navigable Water (TNW).
- The stakeholder organization CREST conducted a water body use survey (2009) of certain waterbodies in the Los Angeles River Watershed for the purpose of prioritizing areas of frequent recreational use.
- The environmental organization Friends of the Los Angeles River (FOLAR) conducted a study (2008) of fish and fishing in the Los Angeles River.
- Members of the Los Angeles River Expedition undertook a 52-mile exploratory expedition of the Los Angeles River (2008) to confirm and document the Los Angeles Rivers ability to support kayaking.

The plan outlines efforts to be conducted using Regional Board resources only. These efforts may be supplemented by volunteer and in-kind contributions from interested parties and stakeholders. Such contributions will be initiated and coordinated through the Los Angeles River Recreational Use Re-evaluation (RECUR) Committee formed for this purpose. Were this to occur, the plan would be revised accordingly. Any other related work conducted independently by stakeholders or interested parties during this period will also be considered as part of the re-evaluation process.

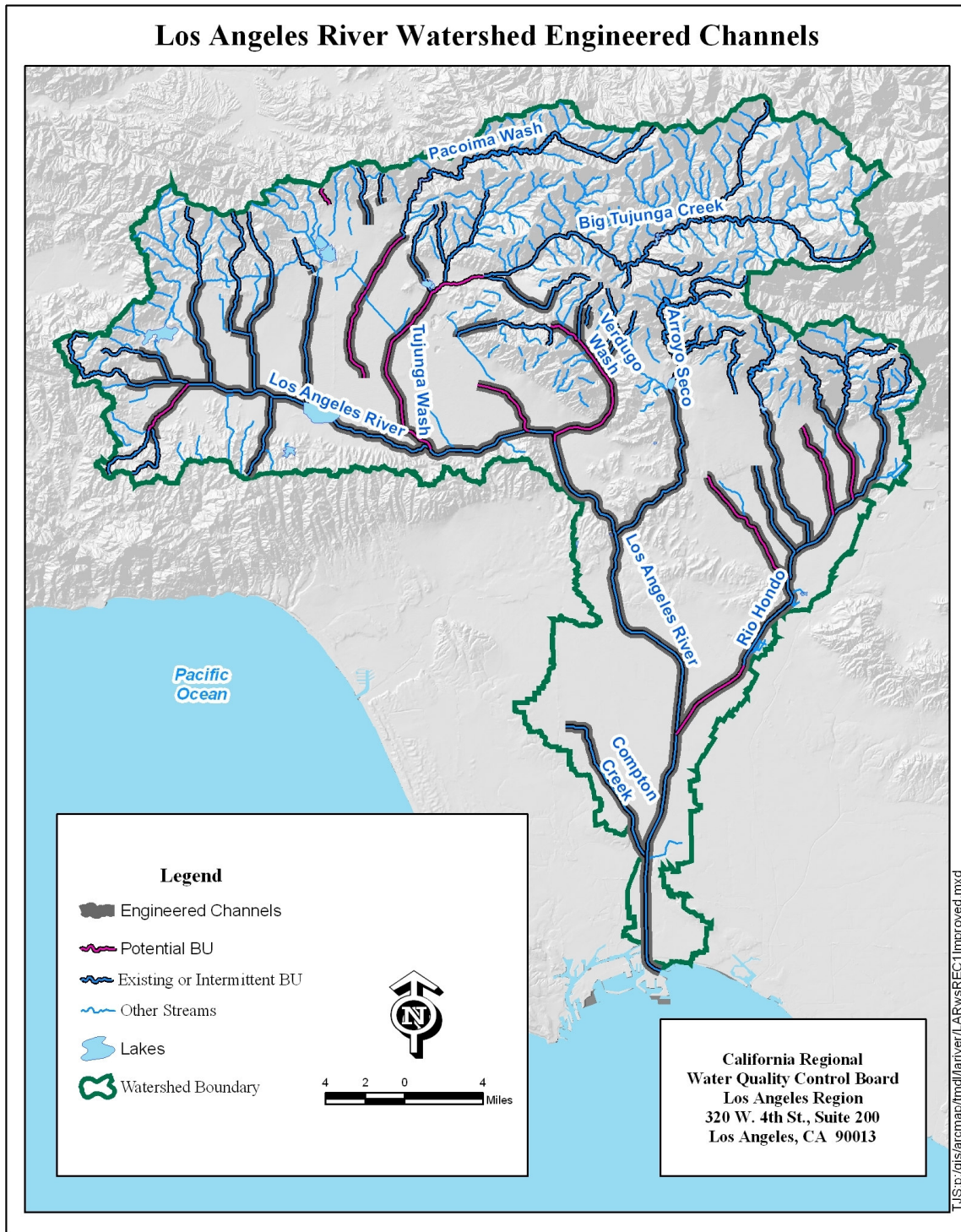
TABLE 1: WATERBODY SEGMENTS TO BE ASSESSED

Name	Reach	Description	REC-1	REC-2
Los Angeles River Estuary		Pacific Ocean to Willow St	E	E
Los Angeles River to Estuary	Reach 1	Willow St to Compton Creek	Es	E
Los Angeles River	Reach 2	Compton Creek to Arroyo Seco	Es	E
Los Angeles River	Reach 3	Arroyo Seco to Burbank Western Channel	Es	E
Los Angeles River	Reach 4	Burbank Western Channel to Sepulveda Dam	E	E
Los Angeles River	Reach 5	Sepulveda Dam to Balboa Blvd	E	E
Los Angeles River	Reach 6	Balboa Blvd to headwaters	E	E
Compton Creek		Los Angeles River to Main St	Es	E
Rio Hondo below Spreading Grounds	Reach 1	Los Angeles River to spreading grounds	Em	E
Rio Hondo to Spreading Grounds	Reach 2	Spreading grounds to Whittier Narrows Dam	E	E
Rio Hondo	Reach 2	Whittier Narrows Dam to headwaters	E	E
Alhambra Wash		Above Rio Hondo	Em	E
Rubio Wash		Rio Hondo to Huntington Dr	Pm	E
Eaton Wash		Rio Hondo to Huntington Dr	Im	E
Eaton Wash (below dam)		Huntington Dr to dam	Im	E
Arcadia Wash (lower)		Rio Hondo to Baldwin Ave	Pm	I
Arcadia Wash (upper)		Above Baldwin Ave	Im	I
Santa Anita Wash (lower)		Rio Hondo to Foothill Blvd	I	I
Santa Anita Wash (upper)		Foothill Blvd to headwaters	Im	I
Little Santa Anita Canyon Creek		Above Santa Anita Wash	Pm	I
Sawpit Wash		Rio Hondo to Monrovia Canyon Creek	Pm	I
Arroyo Seco S. of Devil's Gates. (L)	Reach 1	Los Angeles River to Holly St	Pm	E
Arroyo Seco S. of Devil's Gates (U)	Reach 2	Holly St to Devil's Gates Dam	I	I
Verdugo Wash	Reach 1 & 2	Above Los Angeles River (Reach Break at Verdugo Park)	Im	I
Halls Canyon Channel		Above Verdugo Wash	I	I
Snover Canyon		Above Halls Canyon Channel	Im	I
Pickens Canyon		Above Verdugo Wash	Pm	I
Shields Canyon		Above Verdugo Wash	Im	I

Name	Reach	Description	REC-1	REC-2
Dunsmore Canyon Creek		Above Verdugo Wash	Im	I
Burbank Western Channel		Above Los Angeles River	Im	I
La Tuna Canyon Creek		Above Burbank Western Channel	Im	I
Tujunga Wash		Above Los Angeles River	I	I
Lopez Canyon Creek		Above Tujunga Wash	Pm	I
Haines Canyon Creek		Above Tujunga Wash	Im	I
Vasquez Creek		Above Big Tujunga Canyon Creek	Pm	I
Pacoima Wash		Above Los Angeles River	Im	I
Pacoima Canyon Creek		Above Pacoima Wash	Im	I
Wilson Canyon Creek		Entire length	Pm	E
May Canyon Creek		Entire length	I	E
Bull Creek		Above Los Angeles River	Im	I
Caballero Creek		Above Los Angeles River	Im	I
Aliso Canyon Wash and Creek		Above Los Angeles River	Im	I
Limekiln Canyon Wash		Above Aliso Canyon Wash	Im	I
Browns Canyon Wash and Creek		Above Los Angeles River	Im	I
Arroyo Calabasas		Above Los Angeles River	Pm	I
Dry Canyon Creek		Above Arroyo Calabasas	Im	I
Bell Creek		Above Los Angeles River	Im	I
Dayton Canyon Creek		Above Bell Creek	I	I

E = Existing use, P = Potential use, I = Intermittent use
m = Access prohibited by Los Angeles County DPW in concrete channelized-areas

FIGURE 1



2. STUDY DESIGN – ASSESSMENT OF RECREATIONAL USES

This project is an assessment of recreational uses in the engineered channels of the Los Angeles River Watershed for the purpose of providing information necessary to make further decisions regarding the applicability of currently designated uses (existing, intermittent, and potential) in these waterbody segments. There are currently 205 miles of engineered channels in the watershed making up 47 waterbody segments as listed in Table 1. Of these waterbody segments, twelve (12) have recreational beneficial uses designated as 'existing', ten (10) as 'potential' and twenty-five (25) as 'intermittent' (see Table 1). Field reconnaissance will be conducted to verify the list of engineered waterbodies and to collect information to document the physical conditions of each waterbody segment (see attached Field Sheet 1).

Historical, current and potential uses will be assessed through field surveys, questionnaires, available documentation, and anecdotal accounts from interested parties and stakeholders, along with a review of available bacterial water quality data. These project elements are discussed in detail below. This methodology may be refined based on comments from interested parties and stakeholders.

2.1 Field Monitoring

Regional Board staff will conduct field surveys over the period of one year. These surveys will consist of field observations of physical conditions (e.g. flow, weather) and recreational use activity, and photo documentation of recreational activity - where possible (see attached Field Sheet 2). In addition surveys of the actual recreational users will be conducted where willing participants will respond to the questions laid out in the attached User Survey (also provided in Spanish).

The field monitoring will commence in winter 2011 and continue through the end of fall 2011. The number of field visits to be conducted is as provided in Table 2. Since the assessment of the existing uses will initially be confirmatory, field visits will be conducted in the spring and summer only. More field visits will be conducted in the winter and spring for intermittent water bodies than in the summer and fall since channel flow would be more likely during these periods. Summer and fall site visits will be conducted to confirm the intermittent nature of channel flows. Waterbodies designated as potential REC-1 will be monitored in all four seasons with emphasis on the spring and summer months when increases in recreational use would be expected. Spring and summer site visits will include weekend and holidays to capture the most likely periods of high recreational use.

The total number of field visits conducted may be adjusted based on results of initial field monitoring. This number may also be adjusted based on any additional resources made available for this project. Where stakeholders and interested parties choose to participate, this work plan will be expanded to

include their efforts which will be coordinated by the Los Angeles River Watershed RECUR Committee. The committee will also help compile and assess field data and information to identify data gaps and determine the need for further field surveys.

TABLE 2: FIELD MONITORING SCHEDULE

REC use Designation (No. of sites)	No. of Field Visits per Site				Number of Visits
	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	
Existing (10)	-	1	2	-	30
Intermittent (12)	2	2	1	1	72
Potential (25)	1	2	3	1	175
Total Number of Site Visits					277

*The number of visits per site may increase as a result of stakeholder participation

2.2 Data/Information Collection and Analysis

Data and information that will assist in evaluating actual uses and the potential for recreational uses in the engineered channels of the Los Angeles River Watershed will be compiled and assessed. Such data will include available water quality monitoring data, flow data, hydrologic modifications, and water level data. Data sources will include relevant use surveys (CREST waterbody survey, LASGRWC Swimming Survey, FOLAR Fish Survey, USEPA's Traditional Navigable Water determination, the Los Angeles River Expedition), water quality monitoring reports, hydrologic reports, and any other readily available, relevant reports identified by staff or interested parties and stakeholders

2.3 Stakeholder Recreational Use Surveys

E-mail surveys will be sent out to all interested parties on the Regional Boards Basin Planning and Los Angeles River Watershed TMDL mailing lists to collect information on the historical and current recreational uses of the water bodies in the Los Angeles River Watershed. Survey responses will be presented and discussed at one of the stakeholder workshops to be held during the course of this assessment. The results of these surveys may trigger additional field visits, and may extend the period for field assessment. This mode of collecting recreational use information was used by Regional Board staff during the use attainability analysis for Ballona Creek and Estuary. CREST held a workshop for the same purpose as part of their Water Body Use Survey. However, their survey was limited to the bacteria-impaired reaches of the watershed which include 14 out of the 47 waterbody segments being assessed. This electronic survey will include all 47 of the water body segments as listed in Table 1 and will be sent to an expanded group of stakeholders for participation.

2.4 Review of Plans for Future Recreational Use

Review of relevant watershed and municipal master planning documents will be conducted to determine whether or not planning activities could result in a change in the nature or extent of recreational uses in the water body segments being re-evaluated. Such changes could be effected, for example, by increasing and/or improving access, and/or improving physical conditions in and around the water body that may result in increased opportunities for recreation. Watershed planning documents that would be pertinent to this exercise include, but are not limited to:

- Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan
- Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Water Resources Management Plan (IRWMP)
- Los Angeles River Master Plan
- Compton Creek Watershed Master Plan
- Compton Creek Regional Garden Master Plan
- Rio Hondo Watershed Management Plan
- Arroyo Seco Watershed Management and Restoration Plan
- Tujunga /Pacoima Watershed Plan

Future recreational use considerations will also include expected improvements in water quality as a result of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and stormwater programs, and current efforts underway by various organizations to increase and/or improve recreational opportunities in and around the water bodies under consideration.

3. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Stakeholders will have numerous opportunities to be involved and kept abreast of the process. A kick-off workshop was held on September 27, 2010 to inform stakeholders and interested parties of the Regional Board's intent to begin the re-evaluation process. Interested persons and parties were encouraged to sign up to participate in volunteer efforts including field monitoring, data collection, and the coordination of such efforts. Stakeholders signed-up as participants on the Los Angeles River RECUR Committee which will be tasked with coordinating use surveys by interested parties, along with the collection and compilation of relevant data and information. The time commitment required from members of the RECUR committee will be dictated by the level of participation by various interested persons, agencies and or organizations in the different project elements. While initial sign-ups occurred during the kick-off workshop, stakeholders have the option to volunteer/participate at any time during the re-assessment process.

Also, Regional Board staff will hold workshops periodically to inform stakeholders of the progress of the re-evaluation and to solicit their input on any completed work. Stakeholders will also have ample opportunity to comment on any reports or documents developed upon completion of the assessment. Any proposed Basin Plan amendments that arise as a result of this process will undergo a separate process and will fulfill all public noticing requirements.

4. FINAL REPORT

The final report, prepared by Regional Board staff, will be a compilation of the results of the recreational use assessment. The report will also make the determination regarding which of the water bodies assessed would be candidates for possible modification, removal, or upgrading of their designated recreational use.

5. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The preliminary schedule for this project is as presented in Table 3. However, adherence to this schedule will be dictated by the availability of resources to conduct field surveys. Therefore, it is possible that the schedule presented may be extended by several months to accommodate field monitoring – as necessary.

TABLE 3: SCHEDULE OF PROJECT ELEMENTS

Item	Date
Field Reconnaissance	November 2010 – January 2011
Field Monitoring <i>Winter Use Survey</i> <i>Spring Use Survey</i> <i>Summer Use Survey</i> <i>Fall Use Survey</i>	January 2011 - December 2011 <i>January - March 2011</i> <i>March - May 2011</i> <i>June - mid September 2011</i> <i>October - December 2011</i>
Electronic Recreational Use Surveys	March – September 2011
Stakeholder Workshops	Spring 2011, Summer 2011, Winter 2011
Review of Plans for Future Recreational Use	Continuous through December 2011
Data Collection and Analysis	Continuous through March 2012
Final Report	Late Summer 2012
Develop Potential Basin Plan Amendments	Winter 2012
Board consideration of potential BPAs	To be determined

**LOS ANGELES RIVER WATERSHED RECREATIONAL USE RE-EVALUATION
ATTACHMENTS: FIELD SHEETS AND USER SURVEYS**

DRAFT

**LOS ANGELES RIVER WATERSHED RECREATIONAL USE RE-EVALUATION
FIELD SHEET (1) RECONNAISSANCE**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Latitude/Longitude: _____

Access point/ Mode of access: _____ / _____

Channel Description: Sides: Concrete Vertical / Concrete Trapezoidal / Rip-rap / Earthen
Bottom: Concrete / Earthen

Low flow Channel: Present/Absent

Flow: Present/Absent
Comments _____

Fencing: Present/Absent
Comments _____

Potential access points (e.g. gates, maintenance ramps, break in fencing, ladders) specify: _____

If present are gates: Unlocked / Locked / Absent?

Other signs of access (e.g. graffiti, homeless encampments): _____

Bike Path: Present / Absent

Adjacent Recreational Facility (e.g. park, golf course): Yes / No
Comments: _____

Adjacent land use _____

Photo(s) Taken: Yes/No
If yes, notes _____

Water quality sample collected? Yes / No
Comments: _____

Extent of Waterbody Segment Surveyed: _____

**LOS ANGELES RIVER WATERSHED RECREATIONAL USE RE-EVALUATION
FIELD SHEET (2) USE SURVEY**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Access point/ Mode of access: _____ / _____

Weather Conditions: _____

Flow: Present/Absent
Comments _____

Water quality sample collected? Yes / No
Comments on water quality (e.g. presence of trash, foam or algae): _____

Number of people present: _____
Number of Children present? _____

Note number of people engaged in the following activities

Walking / running	_____	Educational Activities	_____
Hiking	_____	Clean-up activities	_____
Biking	_____	Maintenance activities	_____
Bird watching	_____	Cultural activities	_____
Picnicking	_____		
Camping	_____		
Fishing	_____		
Wading	_____		
Kayaking	_____		
Swimming	_____		
Other activities (please describe):	_____		

Photo(s) Taken: Yes/No
If yes, notes _____

Number of User Surveys Completed _____

Duration of Site Visit: _____

**LOS ANGELES RIVER RECREATIONAL USE RE-EVALUATION (RECUR)
USER SURVEY**

The Los Angeles Regional Board is conducting an assessment of the type and extent of recreational activity taking place in water bodies throughout the Los Angeles River Watershed in order to ensure that water quality standards, for the protection of recreational users, are assigned appropriately.

Date: _____

Name (optional): _____

Choose one: Resident/Visitor

1. How long have you been coming to the river/creek/stream; _____

2. How often do you frequent the river/creek/stream?

a. In dry weather _____

b. In wet weather _____

3. How do you access the river/creek/stream? _____

4. What kind of activities do you engage in here? _____

5. How far up or down the river/creek/stream do you go? _____

6. What other recreational activities have you observed in and around the river/creek/stream? _____

7. What other areas do you visit along the river/creek/stream? _____

8. What kind of activities have you observed in and around the river/creek/stream in these areas? _____

9. Do you have any concerns about using this river/creek/stream? _____
If yes, describe _____

10. What is your perception of the water quality in this river/creek/stream? _____

Thank you for your participation!

**REEVALUACIÓN SOBRE EL USO RECREATIVO DEL RIO DE LOS ANGELES
ENCUESTA AL USUARIO**

La Junta Regional Sobre el Control de la Calidad del Agua en Los Ángeles (por la sigla en inglés, LARWQCB) está realizando una evaluación sobre el tipo y extensión de las actividades recreativas que tienen lugar en los cuerpos de agua en toda la Cuenca del Río de Los Ángeles con el fin de garantizar que las normas de calidad del agua se asignan adecuadamente, para la protección de los usuarios por actividades de entretenimiento..

Fecha: _____

Nombre (opcional): _____

Elija uno: Residente / Visitante

1. ¿Por cuánto tiempo ha estado viniendo al río / arroyo? _____

2. ¿Con qué frecuencia lo ha visitado el río / arroyo?

a. En tiempo seco _____

b. En tiempo húmeda _____

3. ¿Cómo llega hasta al río / arroyo? _____

4. ¿En qué tipo de actividades se involucra durante su visita? _____

5. ¿Hasta qué punto hacia arriba o hacia abajo del río / arroyo va usted?

6. ¿Qué otras actividades recreativas ha observado dentro y en los alrededores del río / arroyo / río? _____

7. ¿Qué otras áreas visita a lo largo del río / arroyo? _____

8. ¿Qué tipo de actividades ha observado dentro y alrededor del río/ arroyo o de un arroyo en estas áreas? _____

9. ¿Tiene alguna duda sobre el uso de este río / arroyo? _____
En caso afirmativo, describir _____

10. ¿Cuál es su percepción sobre la calidad del agua en este río / arroyo / río?

Gracias por participar!