

THE LOS ANGELES RIVER

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Background sheet #1 from the

LA City Council Ad Hoc Committee on the Los Angeles River:

Councilmember Ed Reyes, Chair • Councilmember Eric Garcetti, Vice Chair
Councilmember Wendy Greuel • Councilmember Tom LaBonge • Councilmember Jan Perry

October 2002

All over the world, cities, founded on great rivers, are rediscovering and revitalizing their riverfronts. River revitalization brings many and varied opportunities - including: parks, trails, recreation, nature, neighborhood identity, jobs, community development, tourism, and civic pride. Many Angelinos are unfamiliar with the LA River, even though it flows through our communities. Here is some history and background on what's happening on the LA River.

Early History

The Los Angeles River flowed here long before Europeans first arrived. The River was the only source of water for Los Angeles for much of the time as we grew from a small pueblo to the world class city we are today. Water was diverted from the river to the pueblo through a complex system of zanjas (ditches), which allowed agriculture to flourish in the region.

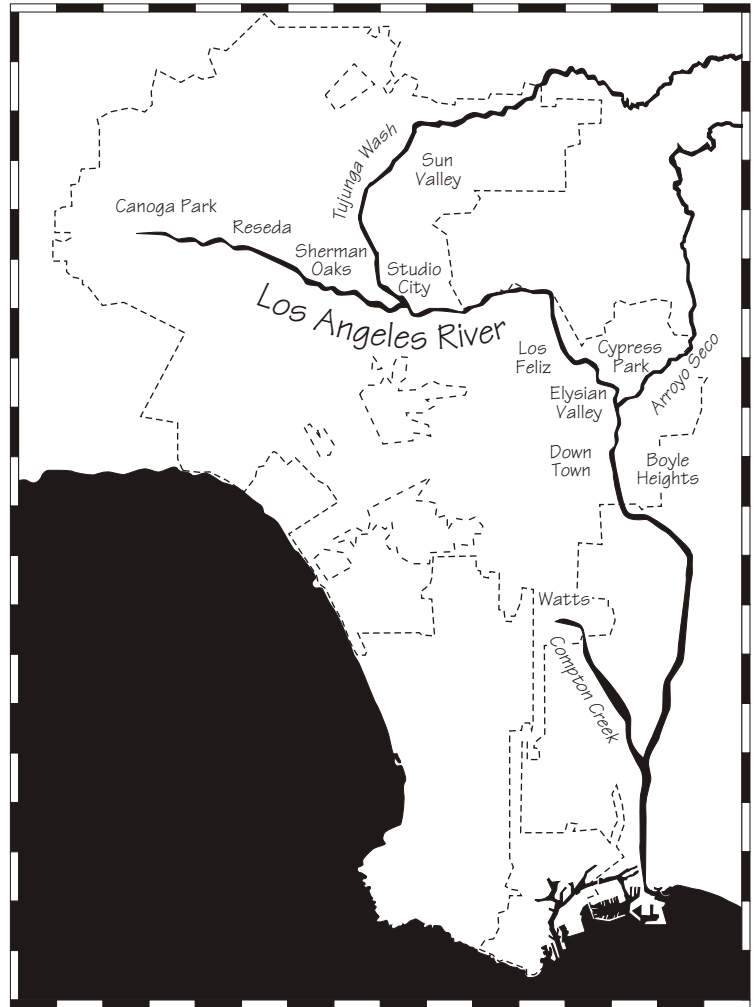
Flood Danger

Though it carried very little water in the dry season, the LA River frequently flooded during winter rains. Two major floods in the 1930's killed over 50 people and damaged a great deal of property. In the 50's and 60's the federal government straightened, deepened, and reinforced the river with concrete.

The concrete structure has saved lives and prevented property damage, but has resulted in a river that is considered an eyesore, and not particularly welcoming to humans and nature.

River Revitalization

In recent years, various community and governmental groups have been working together to revitalize the LA River. In 2002, under the leadership of Councilmember Ed Reyes, the Los Angeles City Council established the new Ad Hoc Committee on the Los Angeles River. The committee serves as a clearinghouse for river projects, encouraging community involvement in the ongoing river improvements, and helping coordinate river projects within the City.



For more information on the Ad Hoc River Committee, contact your local councilmember:

CD1 - (213)485-3451 • CD2 - (213)485-3391 • CD4 - (213)485-3337

CD9 - (213)485-3351 • CD13 - (213)473-7013 or email lariver@council.lacity.org