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AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS: Salazar Highlights Two Proposed Projects in California to Promote Outdoor Recreation, Conservation

Projects Will Be Part of 50-State Report

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WASHINGTON — Just days before the release of a 50-state report outlining some of the country's most promising ways to reconnect Americans to the natural world, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today highlighted two projects in the state of California that will be included in the final report — representing what states believe are among the best investments in the nation to support a healthy, active population, conserve wildlife and working lands, and create travel, tourism and outdoor-recreation jobs across the country.

Restoring water flows and providing recreational opportunities on the San Joaquin River and improving recreational trails along the Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River are among 100 projects nationwide that will be highlighted in next week's report — two in every state — as part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to establish a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda and reconnect Americans to the outdoors.

The report is a result of 50 meetings with governors and stakeholders held by Salazar and other senior Interior officials to solicit ideas on how to best implement AGO in their states. These projects were identified for their potential to conserve important lands and build recreation opportunities and economic growth for the surrounding communities as part of close engagement with Gov. Jerry Brown and the state of California, as well as private landowners, local- and tribal-elected officials, community organizations and outdoor-recreation and conservation stakeholders. The full 50-state report will be released in the coming weeks.

"Under the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, we are listening to the people of California and communities across America and working with them on locally-based projects that will conserve the beauty and health of our land and water and open up more opportunities for people to enjoy them," Salazar said. "My staff and I have been asking each governor for the most promising projects to support in their states, and we will do all we can to help move them forward."

The two projects in California highlighted by Salazar in the forthcoming report are:

San Joaquin River

In 2006, the San Joaquin River Restoration Program settled an 18-year lawsuit regarding the provision of sufficient water for fish habitat in the San Joaquin River. The program is a comprehensive, long-term effort to restore flows from Friant Dam to the confluence with the Merced River. It will re-establish vital habitat on an important stretch of river and achieve the conservation goals of both the state and AGO. Among the benefits are restoring large areas of desiccated habitat and reinstating salmon runs in the watershed while avoiding adverse impacts on water supply.

Along today's San Joaquin River is a sparse, but vital, network of places where people can experience and enjoy

the river. The San Joaquin River Partnership is a collaboration of 13 private, non-profit organizations committed to seeing the river restored. Working with the National Park Service Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, and with other federal and state agencies, the Partnership has adopted a vision for a San Joaquin River National Blueway as a mosaic of parks, wildlife refuges, and other public-access areas that create recreational opportunities on land and water. The blueway is anticipated to become a regional and statewide asset that fosters health, strengthens community ties, enhances learning, and supports restoration and conservation efforts.

Los Angeles River Trail + San Gabriel River Trail Improvements

Almost 5.7 million people live within 10 miles of California's Los Angeles River Trail, and 5.5 million are within 10 miles of the nearby San Gabriel River trail. These recreational trails along Los Angeles County's principal rivers connect urban residents to a network of the region's great parks and outdoor recreation areas, including Los Angeles State Historic Park, Griffith Park, the Arroyo Seco, and Angeles National Forest. Improvements to these trails will ensure they continue to provide healthy recreation, connect neighborhoods to existing outdoor recreation areas, and provide a non-motorized transportation alternative.

The city of Los Angeles has committed to connecting people to the rivers and trails through the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, which identifies more than 240 potential projects to restore riverside habitat, increase public access to the river, and promote recreational opportunities surrounding the river.

Construction of these projects is expected to create as many of 19,000 new permanent jobs. Proposed projects include bike trails, parks, and wetland restoration. Federal support for the LARRMP through the Army Corps of Engineers has already made possible several projects to restore the ecosystem surrounding the Arroyo Seco confluence and conserve high-value wildlife habitat in the riparian area surrounding Bull Creek Channel.

The report will also include potential actions by Interior and its bureaus to support the projects identified. In California, for example, the Department could support restoration flows to the San Joaquin River, as well as the reintroduction of salmon. It could also support new recreation access to the river.

Along the Los Angeles and San Gabriel rivers, additional trail improvements by local governments and nonprofits could be financed with grants awarded through State Parks' Office of Grants and Local Services.

The Department of the Interior will work with each of its key bureaus — including the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — to direct available resources and personnel to make these projects a reality.

"The America's Great Outdoors Initiative turns the conventional wisdom about the federal government's role in conservation on its head," Salazar said. "Rather than dictate policies or conservation strategies from Washington, it supports grassroots, locally driven initiatives."

For more information on the President's America's Great Outdoors initiative, [click here](#).

To view a map of the projects already announced, [click here](#).

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