

# WATERSHED

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## FRIENDS OF THE SANTA CLARA RIVER

Friends of the Santa Clara River is a non-profit, public-interest organization dedicated to the protection, enhancement and management of the resources of the Santa Clara River, which flows approximately 100 miles from Acton, California to the Pacific Ocean. The Santa Clara watershed is the largest natural river system remaining in Southern California, and the river was selected by American Rivers in 2005 as one of the nation's most endangered.

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## **Environmental Groups Settle with Magic Mountain on Stormwater Runoff Pollution**

The following press release was issued on March 31, 2015 regarding settlement of a lawsuit by FSCR and others against Magic Mountain for violation of water quality standards in stormwater discharges. This settlement will require the facility to comply with much stricter limits on a range of pollutants including trash and metals such as copper, zinc and aluminum, which are harmful to aquatic species in the Santa Clara River.

Los Angeles, California – March 31, 2015 (Los Angeles, CA) – Recently the Los Angeles Waterkeeper, Wishtoyo Foundation, Wishtoyo Foundation’s Ventura Coastkeeper Program, and Friends of the Santa Clara River reached an agreement with Magic Mountain to address pollution in the Santa Clara River. The environmental groups filed a lawsuit in 2012 under the federal Clean Water Act, alleging that the amusement park’s stormwater discharges violate water quality limits.

“This agreement marks a significant step in the stewardship of the Santa Clara River – an incredibly important watershed to nearby communities and several endangered and threatened species,” said Liz Crosson, Executive Director of Los Angeles Waterkeeper.

Bonnie Rabjohn, Park President of Magic Mountain, stated “Magic Mountain is committed to protecting our environment and we look forward to working with these organizations over the next few years to improve water quality and support conservational business practices.”

In addition to making a substantial contribution to an environmental project designed to protect the Santa Clara River, Magic Mountain will develop and implement an improved Facility Trash Management Plan as well as new and improved best management practices to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act and to protect the Santa Clara River.

“Magic Mountain’s agreement to better management practices that affect the Santa Clara River will improve the health of the river and will give its wildlife and resources a chance to recover. It is our responsibility to protect the history of Chumash life to assure the continuum of our Traditions today and into the future,” said Mati Waiya, Chumash Ceremonial Elder and Executive Director of the Wishtoyo Foundation and its Ventura Coastkeeper Program.

“This commitment by Magic Mountain properly protects the birthrights of the communities we represent from Valencia, Santa Clarita, Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Saticoy, El Rio, Ventura, and Oxnard to a clean and healthy Santa Clara River that contains an abundance of

native species and ample recreational, wildlife viewing, and educational opportunities,” said Jason Weiner, General Counsel for Wishtoyo and its Ventura Coastkeeper Program.

Flowing approximately 116 miles from the headwaters of the San Gabriel Mountains to the Pacific Ocean through a 1,600 square mile watershed, the Santa Clara River is southern California’s last naturally flowing major river system. In addition to being the largest wild river remaining in southern California, the Santa Clara River is home to as many as 17 species listed as threatened or endangered by state and federal governments, including the Southern California Steelhead, and provides unmatched recreational, cultural, aesthetic, and spiritual opportunities and resources in the region.

“The settlement agreement, the culmination of an involved legal process, represents a major step forward in protecting the water quality and wildlife of the Santa Clara River ecosystem,” said Ron Bottorff, Chair of the Friends of the Santa Clara River.

#### ABOUT LOS ANGELES WATERKEEPER

Founded in 1993, LA Waterkeeper’s mission is to protect and restore Santa Monica Bay, San Pedro Bay, and adjacent waters through enforcement, fieldwork, and community action. We work to achieve this goal through litigation and regulatory programs that ensure water quality protections in waterways throughout L.A. County. LA Waterkeeper’s Litigation & Advocacy, Marine, and Water Quality teams conduct interconnected projects that serve this mission.

#### ABOUT WISHTOYO AND ITS VENTURA COASTKEEPER PROGRAM

Founded in 1997, the Wishtoyo Foundation’s mission is to preserve, protect and restore Chumash culture, the culture and history of coastal communities, cultural resources, and the environment. Ventura Coastkeeper, a program of Wishtoyo, protects, preserves, and restores the ecological integrity and water quality of Ventura County’s inland water bodies, coastal waters, and watersheds.

#### ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE SANTA CLARA RIVER

Friends of the Santa Clara River formed in 1993 and is dedicated to the protection, enhancement and management of the resources of the Santa Clara River watershed.



River, and other infrastructure. The Project would involve nearly five miles of buried soil-cement bank stabilization along the Santa Clara River, which would alter and permanently confine the river channel. About 9 miles of tributary streams would be converted to buried storm drains, and another 7 miles of streams would be filled and reconstructed on top of filled areas.

But there is hope this can all be revised to achieve a much better outcome for the Santa Clara River ecosystem. FSCR and our allies - the Center for Biological Diversity, SCOPE and Wishtoyo Foundation's Ventura Coastkeeper Program - are currently involved in litigation against the Army Corps of Engineers opposing its issuance of a Clean Water Act permit that would allow impacts of this severity to the Santa Clara River watershed. Stay tuned.