



# BALDWIN HILLS CONSERVANCY 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The detailed strategies and policies for watershed protection and land conservation within the Conservancy’s geographic area are instrumental in delivering a cohesive message reflecting statewide priorities for California’s environmental health. Since its inception, the Conservancy has served as a successful demonstration of effective collaboration with federal, state, and local agencies. Regional planning decisions are influenced by the state’s conservation goals through the multi-jurisdictional decision-making forum created by the Baldwin Hills Conservancy Act. The Conservancy leverages expertise and resources to acquire lands and implement projects of statewide significance through local assistance grants and program delivery support. Ultimately, the Conservancy is responsible for implementing the state's innovative conservation policies and making them available to the neighboring underserved communities in the region; as well as the millions of area voters who approved initiatives aimed at preserving, protecting, and enhancing the state's natural resources.

The *Baldwin Hills Conservancy 2020 Updated Strategic Plan* describes current and proposed resource allocation by the Conservancy; public needs served by the agency; policies and principles guiding the Conservancy and its staff; and the proposed course of the agency’s efforts. The plan begins with background on the Conservancy, including its statutory authorities. The legislative mandates have been applied in three main themes of the agency’s current work program:

- Conservation
- Planning and Development
- Interpretation and Education

The program descriptions in the pages to follow are meant to describe issues and opportunities, not just statutory authorities. In some cases, these issues may be addressed under a range of adopted policies available to the Conservancy. As the *Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan* is the principle reference for selecting projects, the Conservancy has identified program priorities that are consistent with the plan’s objectives. Additional projects will be considered under criteria adopted by the Conservancy Board. Unless otherwise noted, all projects are targeted for completion during the Conservancy’s statutory existence, which will either expire or be extended on or before January 1, 2026 (reference: Public Resources Code Section 32580). The *Strategic Plan* is a “living” document, intended for reference in the course of conducting the daily activities of the Conservancy. The plan will be subject to a process of evaluation and updating every two to three years.

## BALDWIN HILLS CONSERVANCY'S MISSION

The Baldwin Hills Conservancy's mission is to acquire open space and manage public lands within the Baldwin Hills area, and to provide recreation, restoration and protection of wildlife habitat within the territory for the public's enjoyment and educational experience.

## SUMMARY OF STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

The three core programs that make up the Conservancy's strategic plan are supported by the statutory authorities contained in Division 22.7 of the Public Resources Code. To carry out the statutory mandates in a cost-effective manner and be responsive to the needs of local communities, there are additional legislative mandates that drive the work of the Conservancy as documented below:

### **Land Conservation** (reference: Public Resources Code Section 32566):

The Conservancy shall determine acquisition priorities and may acquire real property or any interest in real property within the Baldwin Hills area from willing sellers and at fair market value or on other mutually acceptable terms, upon a finding that the acquisition is consistent with the purposes of the Conservancy. The Conservancy may acquire the property itself or may coordinate the acquisition with other public agencies with appropriate responsibility and available funding or land to exchange. The overall objectives of the land acquisition program shall be to assist in accomplishing land transactions that are mutually beneficial to the landowners and the Conservancy, and that meet the Conservancy's purposes.

### **Planning and Improvements** [reference: Public Resources Code Sections 32565.5 (b) and (c), 32568 (a)]:

The Conservancy establishes policies and priorities within the Baldwin Hills area, and conducts any necessary planning activities in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 32555 and; give priority to related projects that create expanded opportunities that provide recreation, aesthetic improvement, and wildlife habitat in the Baldwin Hills area.

The Conservancy may, within the Baldwin Hills area, undertake site improvement projects; regulate public access; re-vegetate and otherwise rehabilitate degraded areas, in consultation with other public agencies with appropriate jurisdiction and expertise; upgrade deteriorating facilities; and construct new facilities as needed for outdoor recreation, nature appreciation and interpretation, and natural resource protection. These projects shall be directed by the Conservancy and undertaken by other public agencies, with the Conservancy providing overall coordination through setting priorities for projects and assuring uniformity of approach.

**Recreation & Interpretation** [reference: Public Resources Code Section 32555 (c)]:

The Conservancy is created to provide for the public's enjoyment, and to enhance the recreational and educational experience on public lands in the territory in a manner consistent with the protection of lands and resources in the area.

**Management of Public Lands** [reference: Public Resources Code Sections 32566, 32569 (a)]:

The Conservancy may direct the management, operation, administration, and maintenance of the lands and facilities it acquires. The Conservancy may initiate, negotiate, and participate in agreements for the management of land under its ownership or control with local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, individuals, or other entities and may enter into any other agreements authorized by state or federal law. Local public agencies may enter into an agreement to transfer responsibility for the management of the land located within the Baldwin Hills area to the conservancy.

**Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan** [reference: Chapter 752 of the Statutes of 1999 Section 1 (c) and Public Resources Code Section 32656.5 (f)]:

Notwithstanding Section 7550.5 of the Government Code, the Secretary of Resources, in conjunction with the Director of Parks and Recreation, shall, not later than January 1, 2002, prepare and submit to the Legislature a master plan for the expansion and development of the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area that is designed to accomplish all of the following goals:

- 1) Increase active recreation opportunities for underserved communities.
- 2) Create a comprehensive trail system.
- 3) Provide for public access and entry ways.
- 4) Protect and restore natural habitat.
- 5) Protect critical view sheds.

- 6) Protect and improve urban water quality.
- 7) Emphasize connections between existing parks, trails, and urban streams.
- 8) Restore industrial lands to park and open-space purposes.
- 9) Protect watersheds connecting to Santa Monica Bay.

The Conservancy shall approve the master plan and prioritize and implement the following in accordance with the master plan and with the master plan recommendations: (1) The acquisition of additional recreational and open space and a plan for the management of lands under the jurisdiction of the Conservancy, including additional or upgraded facilities and parks that may be necessary or desirable. (2) The planned conveyance of lands acquired and restored, or lands acquired, restored, and developed, to the Department of Parks and Recreation or to any other public agency once the acquisition and improvements have been finalized.

**Grants** (reference: Public Resources Code Section 32569 (a)):

The Conservancy may award grants to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations for the purposes of its division. The Conservancy shall administer any funds appropriated to it and any revenue generated by public agencies for the Baldwin Hills area and contributed to the Conservancy, and may expend those funds for capital improvements, land acquisition, or support of the Conservancy's operations.

**Prop 40: California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act** [reference: Public Resources Code Section 5096.650 (b)]:

**Prop 84: The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006** [reference: Public Resources Code Section 75060(d)(2)]:

**Prop 1: Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014** [reference: California Water Code (CWC) Division 26.7; §79730 and §79731(d); Water Code Section 79732(a)]:

**Prop 68: California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018** [reference: Public Resources Code Section 80110 (b)(1)]:

Appropriations from the above bond acts may be spent in accordance with the particular provisions of the statute creating the Conservancy for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, preservation, interpretation, restoration and protection of land and water resources.

# CONTEXT FOR STRATEGIC PLAN

## How We Work

The Conservancy protects, restores, and enhances natural resources, while creating places for residents to connect with nature close to home. We work closely with state policymakers to encourage equity in funding allocations and facilitate on the ground investments in partnership with local NGO's, community stakeholders and public agencies.

- The Conservancy invests millions of dollars in projects that restore or protect urban open space and natural wildlife areas
- The Conservancy stewards hundreds of acres of land and ensure public access to those lands
- The Conservancy protects critical urban watershed lands and water resources
- The Conservancy collaborates with and supports community-based groups and stakeholders in the most vulnerable regions
- The Conservancy promotes land and water conservation along with local stewardship of area ecosystem biodiversity
- The Conservancy aligns statewide conservation priorities with regional stakeholders such as districts, counties, cities, and non-profits
- The Conservancy develops partnerships to leverage area resources and expertise in planning, funding, research, and advocacy
- The Conservancy furnishes opportunities for access to healthy outdoor recreation, cultural and educational experiences to all residents regardless of physical or financial capability

## Stakeholder Survey

The Conservancy commissioned a user survey which was conducted by the Center for Urban Resilience at Loyola Marymount University in 2017. This two-year study of the Baldwin Hills Parklands aimed to provide the Conservancy and its stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of the Parkland's visitor population's experience. In total, 1,747 surveys were collected from 14 sites over the four comprehensive field seasons. The survey results yielded three planning objectives linked to the drivers of the Conservancy's strategic objectives.

## 1. Infrastructure Improvements

### a. Reduce barriers for bikes and pedestrians.

Despite the majority representation by drivers, 41% of park visitors reported that they would prefer to access the park by bicycling or walking. Increasing bicycle infrastructure, including well-marked lanes and connection points, and installation of more bicycle racks at entrances may help encourage bicycling. Increased connectivity between the parks through the *Park to Playa* project will also allow more visitors to use bikes or walk to the Baldwin Hills Parklands. Creating safer pedestrian access in certain locations, such as the Five-Points intersection at Stocker and Overhill and the main entrance to Kenneth Hahn SRA would help promote walking. Increasing the publicity for the free shuttle and alternative transportation options will also decrease the number of individuals driving to the parks.

### b. Increase tree canopy in the parklands.

Tree canopy is a vital asset that reduces stormwater runoff, improves air quality, reduces the region's carbon footprint, enhances quality of life, contributes to savings on energy bills, and serves as a habitat for wildlife. Where possible and suitable, tree canopy should be increased within the parklands.

### c. Improve parking alternatives.

Since 84% of visitors arrive by car, parking is an important amenity in the Baldwin Hills Parklands. While 72% of users found parking to be convenient, improvements can be made in parks that did not receive high ratings. The locations that visitors found parking somewhat inconvenient were Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park, Culver City Park, Gwen Moore Lake and the Eastern Ridgeline at Kenneth Hahn SRA, and Norman O. Houston. Making off-site or remote parking available may help alleviate some of the issues. Electric vehicle parking can also be created in parks where it is not currently available.

## 2. Educational Efforts

### a. Install additional signage.

Nearly half of the park users reported they would use educational signs throughout the Park if they were available. Signs and displays could be used to inform visitors on topics they seem less aware of (the Ballona wetlands and native plant species), as well as programs or initiatives the park is implementing. Improved signage for general informational and way-finding purposes may also be considered; including greater advertising of the park shuttle service and providing more signs along well-traveled destinations and entrances.

### b. Distribute promotional materials.

Information about *Park to Playa* and the Parklands' existing transportation access mapping should be updated and distributed widely. The Conservancy may consider sending materials to residents in the 1-mile radius around the parks and sharing with other agencies and stakeholders with websites and social media platforms. Additionally, the branding of the Baldwin Hills Conservancy and Parklands should expand to raise awareness of the ongoing investment of improvements and amenities.

### c. Expand use of Spanish-language materials.

Nearly a third of the respondents indicated that they speak Spanish while a lower than expected percentage of users reported that they are Latino or Hispanic. Providing Spanish signs, promotional materials, and other information would serve the Spanish speakers already visiting the park, but also may help increase the visitation from other members of the Latino and Hispanic communities.

### d. Implement formal education programs.

More than one quarter of park visitors said they would use formal programming or education opportunities. The facilities in the parklands can be places for activities such as lectures and performances for youth and families to learn more about culture and the environment. Users who visited more frequently and participated in formal activities expressed stronger place attachment. Those who indicated that they were interested in volunteering opportunities in the parks rated both place attachment factors significantly more than those who were not interested. These results suggested that place attachment may be a motivator for increased stewardship development and community participation.

### 3. Targeted Outreach

- a. Balance between serving frequent users and recruiting new users.

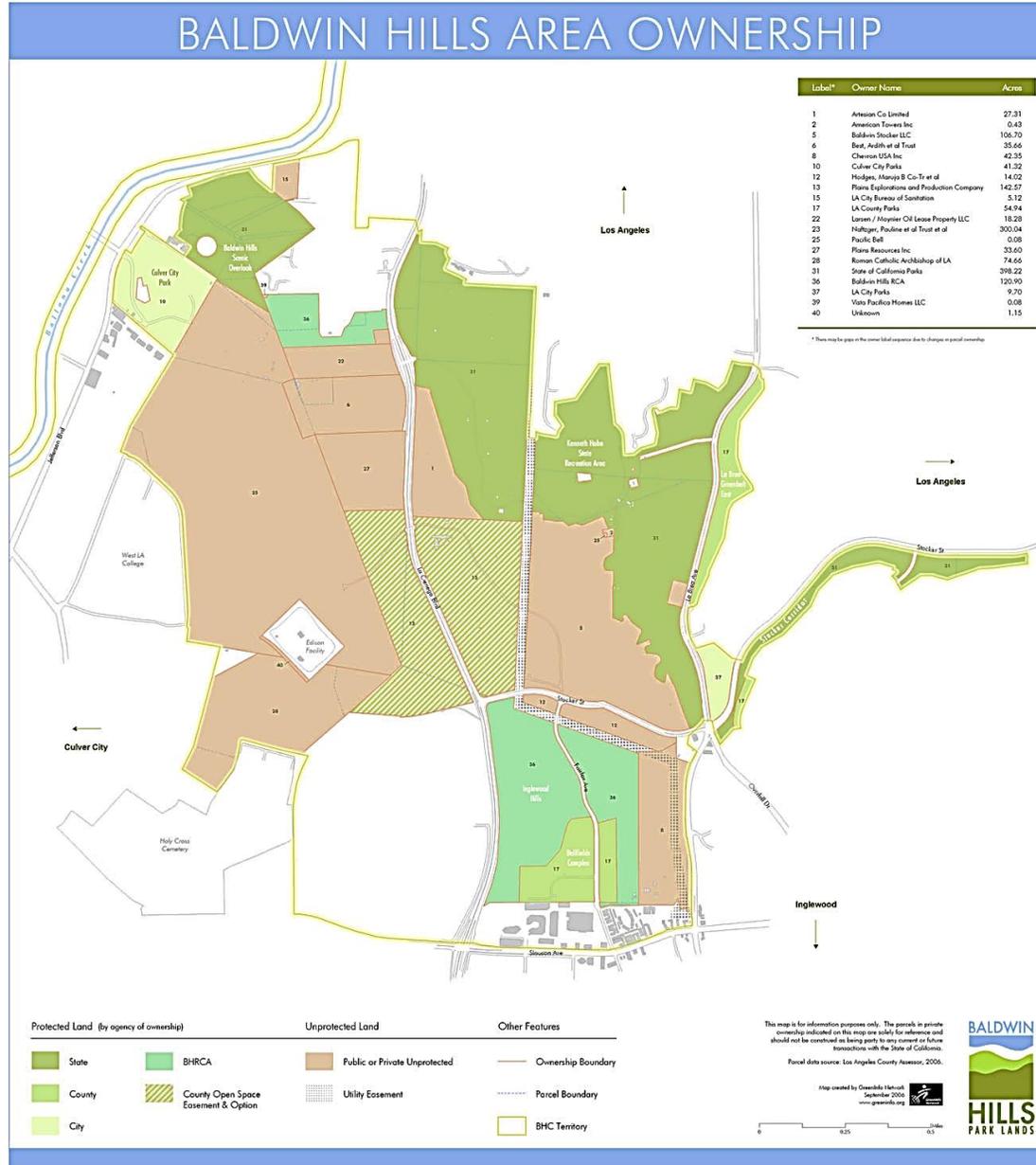
The responses to the survey indicate that most visitors are coming from outside of the 1-mile radius zone considered a walkable range. This creates an opportunity to conduct more localized outreach to area residents to encourage them to visit (and ideally walk) to the Parklands. Adding both the frequent users with the new adjacent users to outreach efforts would yield the best possible outcome. Many respondents reported that they would participate in seasonal activities such as group meet-ups and events. Because the average visitor is younger (approximately 35 years old), offering programming aimed towards that age range (such as yoga or music in the parks) may be an effective way to further bolster visitation rates.

- b. Support increased visitation by African-American and Latino populations.

Groups such as Outdoor Afro and Latino Outdoors exist because African-American and Latino communities are often underrepresented in outdoor recreation. This study found that while the Baldwin Hills Parklands do receive high visitation from these communities, their representation is low when compared to the demographics of the neighborhoods surrounding the Parklands. The Conservancy should consider supporting meet-up groups or other programming aimed directly at increasing park use by neighboring African-American and Latino residents.

## Land Preservation

The geographic area outlined in the authorizing statute features approximately 2,065.31 acres of land within the Baldwin Hills Conservancy boundaries. This includes some oil drilling lands and adjacent communities as well as the Ballona Creek, which contains four miles of channel, public trail and bikeway with private frontage parcels extending west from the Baldwin Hills' northwest foothill as defined by the Conservancy Act. The acreage calculation for the territory is based on digital polygons from Geographic Information System (GIS) two dimensional maps of the area. The Baldwin Hills area, which includes open space contiguous and or adjacent to Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (KHRSA), totals 1,428.13 acres of protected, private or unprotected land as compiled by parcel data supplied by the Los Angeles County Assessor's public records. Current GIS mapping of the parcel fee ownership indicates that of this acreage, approximately 654.48 are private or unprotected lands with major portions of the surface area dedicated to active oil operations. In accordance with Chapter 428, Statutes of 2000, it is the responsibility of the Conservancy to acquire the remaining privately held acreage. (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1**

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Parcel Count</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Total Acreage</b>
<b>BHRCA</b>				
	Finley & Lloyd properties - BHRCA	3	20.8600	
	Inglewood Hills - BHRCA	3	100.0400	
			<b>BHRCA Total</b>	<b>120.90</b>
<b>County Parks</b>				
	Ball fields - County Parks	3	30.4872	
	East La Brea Greenbelt - County Parks	1	22.0500	
	Ruben Ingold Park & Stoneview Park - County Parks	2	7.4000	
			<b>County Parks Total</b>	<b>59.94</b>
<b>County Parks Easement</b>				
	Sentinel Peak Resources	4	142.5700	
			<b>County Parks Easement Total</b>	<b>142.57</b>
<b>Culver City Parks</b>				
	Culver City Park - Culver City Parks	2	41.3200	
			<b>Culver City Parks Total</b>	<b>41.32</b>
<b>LA City Parks</b>				
	Norman O. Houston Park - LA City Parks	1	9.7000	
			<b>LA City Parks Total</b>	<b>9.70</b>
<b>California State Parks</b>				
	Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook - California State Parks	17	57.2840	
	KHSRA – California State Parks	20	309.0785	

Stocker Corridor - California State Parks	5	32.8600	
		<b>State Parks Total</b>	<b>399.22</b>
<b>Private/Unprotected (all others)</b>			
Private	25	654.3594	
Public Unprotected	1	5.1200	
		<b>Private/Unprotected Total</b>	<b>654.48</b>
<b>TOTAL Baldwin Hills Parklands (Proposed)</b>			<b>1,428.13</b>
<b>*Total Land within BHC boundaries (including creek and other communities)</b>			<b>2,065.31</b>

The Conservancy's acquisition strategy evaluates opportunities that will allow for increased recreation activities, habitat protection, interpretive and cultural facilities, environmental interpretation as well as park-related economic sustainability. Working in conjunction with three primary agencies: California State Parks, State Lands Commission, and the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority (a joint powers authority, or JPA), the Conservancy will continue to optimize relationships, expertise and financial resources to engage in a manageable acquisition strategy. Since the majority of the remaining open space in the Baldwin Hills is encumbered with active oil extraction infrastructure, and under current conditions oil and gas production could continue for more than thirty years, the Conservancy must remain flexible in its approach. A thorough economic evaluation of all viable options for financing and acquiring property interests in the Baldwin Hills has been developed as an integral part of the planning strategy to ensure the optimum use of available funding resources.

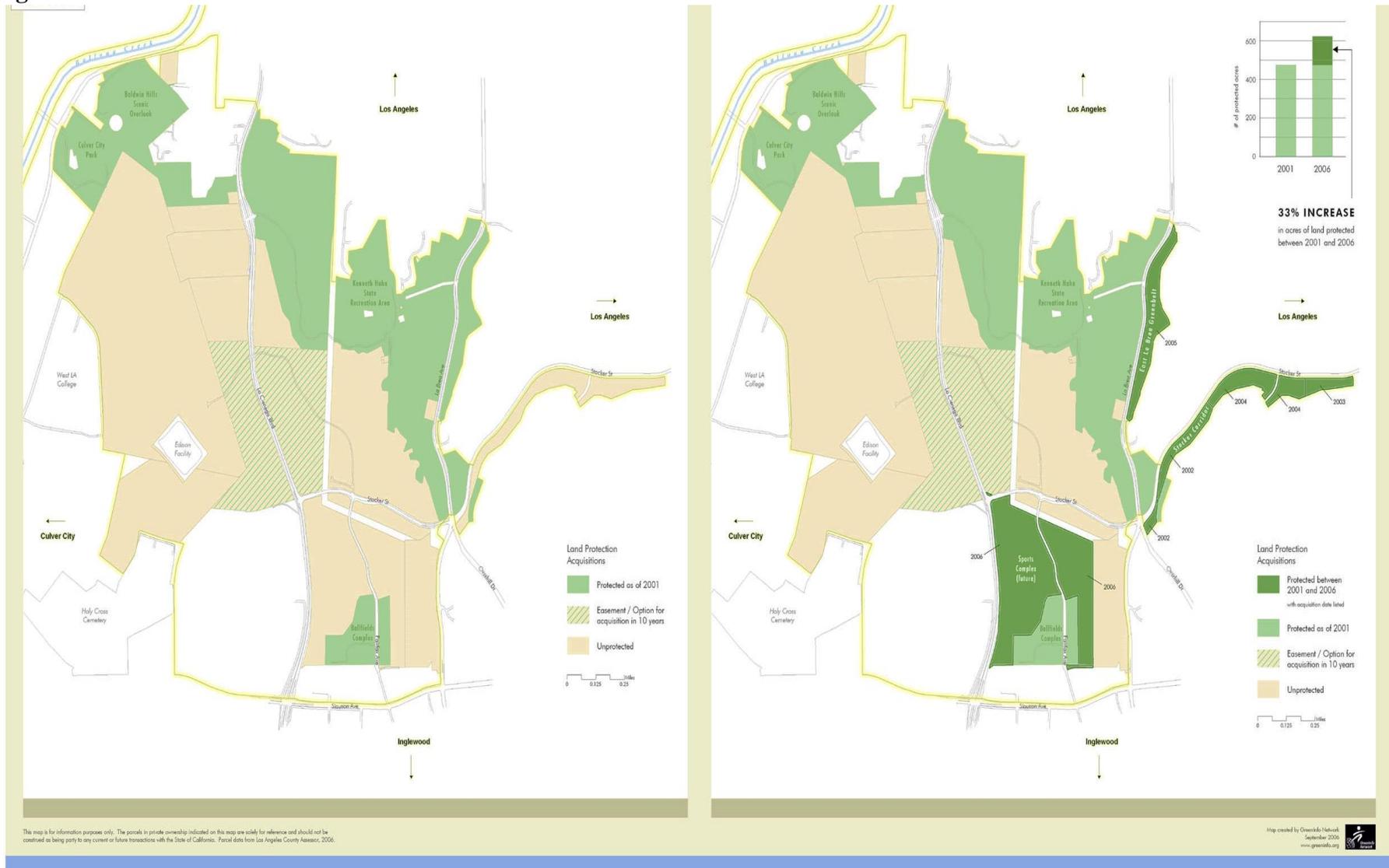
Since the implementation of the Baldwin Hills Community Standards District ordinance by the County of Los Angeles in 2008, ongoing dialog with the field operator, landowners and community stakeholders has been fostered through a Community Advisory Panel. Conservancy participation in these public meetings has resulted in an increased stakeholder understanding of the complex issues related to development of mineral resources, land and water conservation, and public confidence in the long-term compatibility of land use in the area.

Acquiring surface rights for the remaining 654 acres of private land within the active oil field would insure the land is protected for future park use. However, the vast majority of the parcels will remain inaccessible until it is feasible to arrange for improvements that do not interfere with operator and mineral holder interests. The approach applied by land trusts for successful preservation of privately owned active agricultural land utilizes acquisition options that include developing conservation easements. Efforts to develop a suite of easement options that create revenue generating preservation mechanisms, such as wetlands or native chaparral within the developed areas, may create the proper incentive for landowners to either become land stewards or willing sellers. The goal of the easements is to structure a palatable tool to aid landowners in monetizing their property's surface while creating an environmental benefit consistent with the preservation objectives of the Conservancy. With a private or public company selected by the landowner handling the terms of payment and management of preserved land, the implementation of a conservation easement project could be achieved independent of the Conservancy. This model is being adapted for use within the Conservancy's acquisition strategy.

The balance of the acreage in the area is protected public land, including 631.08 acres held in fee by the Conservancy's partner public agencies and an additional 142.57 acres of active oil drilling land under a conservation easement held by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation. The Conservancy has authorized an agreement with the Department of Toxic Substances Control to oversee due diligence on targeted parcels being considered for conversion to public property over the next three years under the easement option for fee title. To date, the Conservancy's acquisition work program has resulted in a 33% increase in public land, or 154.95 acres (see figure 2). Since the boundaries of the Conservancy include an unincorporated part of Los Angeles County, which

touches the cities of Inglewood, Culver City, and Los Angeles, partnerships with all the stakeholders working in the Baldwin Hills area remain critical to successfully implementing our long-range acquisition objectives.

**Figure 2**



## Habitat Preservation

The slopes and canyons of the western and eastern ridgelines of the Baldwin Hills are host to a vast oasis of natural flora composed mainly of native California coastal sage scrub and associated chaparral habitat. Protecting the existing biodiversity of plant and animal species is a priority for the Conservancy. Studies conducted by biologists from the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum and University of California's School of Architecture and Spatial Sciences document the Baldwin Hills area as home to a wide range of California native wildlife. The study reported vast species populations of over 166 birds, 21 mammals, 12 reptile, and 12 butterflies <http://bhc.ca.gov/2017/11/nature-of-the-baldwin-hills-parklands/>. Invasive plants and fragmentation from development and industry have compromised the integrity of the surviving native habitat. These ecosystems are the primary indicators for a healthy environment and are vulnerable due to human population growth and the heat island effect of urban infrastructure. California's Climate Change Adaptation Strategies have particular resonance with preserving biodiversity in highly urbanized regions of the state. With over 9.8 million people residing within greater Los Angeles County, the Parklands present an opportunity to showcase statewide policies through ongoing restoration of the remaining habitat and creation of migratory wildlife corridors that connect to the coastal zone. Areas of focus include, but are not limited to, Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, Culver City Park and the remaining privately held habitat regions beginning at Holy Cross Cemetery and continuing north behind West Los Angeles College. Collaborative restoration programs with City, State and County Parks continue, while the Los Angeles Archdiocese is being pursued to develop a preservation program consistent with the Conservancy's mission.

Working in coordination with the appropriate regulatory agencies, watershed managers, and educational institutions, the Conservancy will continue to advance its goals of habitat restoration, interpretation and protection while incorporating state promulgated considerations for climate adaptation.

## Conservation Matrix

Conservation priorities are identified through the use of a matrix developed for analysis of the parcels that are targeted for purchase (see figure 3). The five property parcels with the highest point total on the conservation matrix are labeled numbers: 23(C), 23(A), 28, 1 and 8(A) on the parcel map (figure 4). Each of these parcels meets vital criteria for prioritization including adjacency to existing publicly owned land or native habitat value. Nearly 140 acres of natural habitat area with existing healthy native coastal sage scrub are included in the priority parcels list.

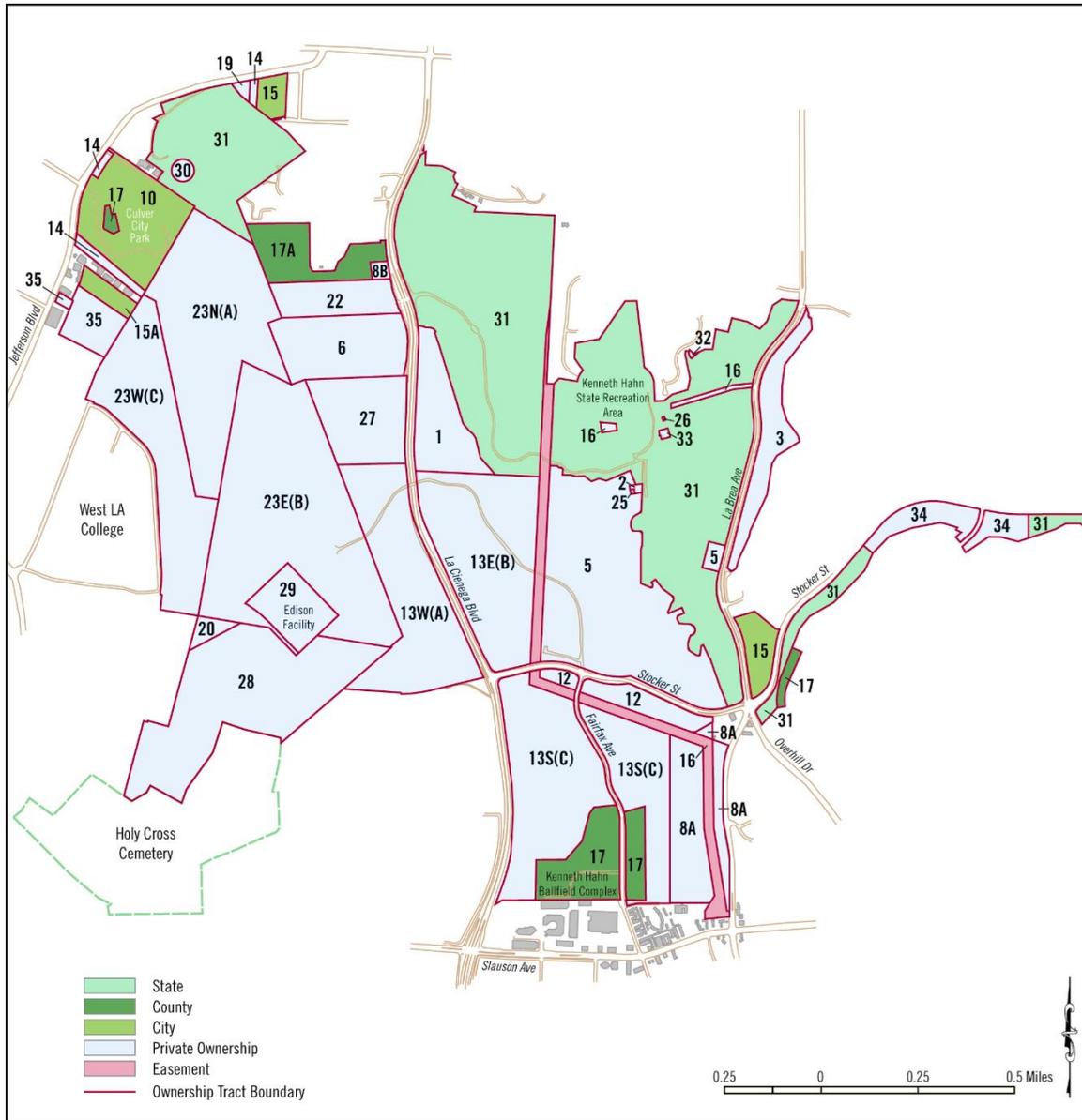
**Figure 3**

Property Number	23(C)	23(A)	28	8 (A)	1
<b>Point Criteria</b>					
<b>Development Threat (5 pts)</b>					
Immediate (4 pts)	0	0	0	0	0
Long-term (1 pt)	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Improvement Potential (4 pts)</b>					
Minimal Mitigation Need (1 pt)	0	0	1	0	0
Few Physical Constraints (1 pt)	1	1	1	0	0
Program Continuity (1 pt)	1	1	1	1	1
Independent Capacity (1 pt)	1	0	1	0	0
<b>Accessibility (3 pts)</b>					
Connectivity to Existing Public Land (2 pts)	2	2	2	2	2

<b>Property Number</b>	<b>23(C)</b>	<b>23(A)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8 (A)</b>	<b>1</b>
Multi-Transportation Accessible (1 pt)	1	0	1	0	0
<b>Recreation Potential (6 pts)</b>					
Active Recreation (2 pt)	0	0	0	2	2
Passive Recreation (2 pt)	2	2	2	2	2
Educational (2 pt)	2	2	2	0	2
<b>Habitat (6 pts)</b>					
Corridor Potential (2 pt)	2	2	2	0	2
Eco-system Viability (2 pt)	2	2	2	0	0
Evidence of Sensitive Species (2 pt)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Public Value (2 pts)</b>					
Local Benefit (1 pt)	1	1	1	1	1
Regional Benefit (1 pt)	1	1	1	1	1
<b>POINT TOTALS</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>

**Figure 3 (continued)**

**Figure 4**



## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Conservancy has an opportunity to redefine what a park in an urban setting can be; establishing an exciting new model for restoring large expanses of natural open space and creating new recreation amenities, and programming in the heart of an urban area. With population density increasing in urban areas, the demand for high-quality outdoor recreation in natural settings has intensified. With this population boom there is a heightened focus on planning for transformation of blighted areas in urban communities into recreational resources.

### Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan

Pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 1 of Chapter 752 of the Statutes of 1999, a master plan has been developed for the expansion of KHSRA. The plan was the result of an extensive two-year public planning process commissioned by California State Parks from 2000 to 2001. Eight community workshops were held from which the conceptual design and park components were derived. The *Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan* was adopted by the Conservancy in September 2002. It provides the conceptual guidelines for the Conservancy to expand on the acquisition and development efforts initiated by the County of Los Angeles and the California State Parks in 1971.

The *Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan* specifies that the park that will result from the Conservancy's efforts will provide "active and passive recreation facilities" and "educational and cultural facilities."

Strategies for site improvements in the *Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan* focus on the following: 1) the potential of the park to provide access to recreation and interpretation opportunities for millions of people within a 10-mile radius, 2) the many scenic vista points from which most of the Los Angeles Basin, Pacific Ocean and local canyons and mountains can be viewed, and 3) a balanced environment with sensitive natural habitat restored to improve wildlife connectivity. For the five-year plan, key capital improvement projects have been culled from the *Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan* (see figure 5).

The land proposed for site improvements as described in this document are mandated by the Conservancy’s mission. The expansion of KHSRA and the Parklands is being approached as a single strategic project: with acquisition of parcels and improvement of publicly held properties fulfilling steps to the stated goal. The Conservancy’s priorities will vary depending on leveraging of resources, project readiness, public demand, and the preservation of specific habitat areas. Each of these factors are separate and independent and can take precedent over the other.

**Figure 5**

<b><u>Master Plan Project Priorities</u></b>	<b><u>Project Location</u></b>
Habitat Restoration and Trail Enhancement @ Lloyd Property/Finley Fee*	Park to Playa segment C
Habitat Restoration (Phase I)*	Baldwin Hills parklands
Jefferson Boulevard Streetscape and Access Improvements*	Jefferson Blvd between Obama Blvd and Duquesne Ave
Baldwin Hills Parklands Branding and Wayfinding*	Perimeter of parklands
Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (BHSO) Culver City connection to Ballona Creek*	Park to Playa Segment D
Stocker Corridor Trail and Bike path*	Park to Playa Segment A
Eastern Ridgeline Expansion*	KHSRA
Ballona Corridor Improvements	Ballona Creek
Ballona Creek Outdoor Classroom*	Milton Street
Multiple-use Athletic Fields Expansion	SE portion of KHSRA
Stocker Street Pedestrian Crossing	Stocker Corridor and Norman Houston Park
Stoneview Nature Center*	Stoneview Drive

Eastern Gateway at Don Lorenzo Drive Access and Streetscape*	La Brea Corridor and Don Lorenzo
Ingold Park Connection to Stocker Trail*	Stocker Corridor Trail at Ingold Park
KHSRA and P2P Trail /Access/ Way finding*	Park to Playa Segment B
KHSRA Habitat Restoration & Existing Trail Improvements	Central KHSRA
La Cienega Pedestrian Bridge*	Park to Playa Segment C
Sports Complex Stormwater and Access Improvements*	SE portion of KHSRA
Culver City Skate Park (Phase II)*	Culver City Park
Culver City Dog Park (Phase II)	Culver City Park
<i>* Indicates completed or currently being implemented</i>	

**Figure 5 (continued)**

## **Improving Existing Facilities**

KHSRA (319 acres) is managed by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation and includes large areas of native coastal sage scrub habitat, lawns and landscaped areas, picnic sites, tot lots, one half-basketball court, a fishing lake, a lotus pond, visitor center, six restrooms and five miles of trails. The visitor center has four administrative offices and a small meeting room. The Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Sports Complex is located at the southern end of the park and includes baseball diamonds and soccer fields with four restrooms.

Priorities for improvements at KHSRA include: upgrades to existing facilities for improved sustainability; expansion of sports facilities; creation of new cultural exhibits and programming; buffering habitat areas with transitional landscaping; turf removal to lower maintenance costs; securing recycled water infrastructure; mitigate off-road biking and unleashed pets to recover natural habitat and reduce erosion; and improving park visitor vehicle access and circulation. As the park expands, these and other future opportunities remain available for the Conservancy to prioritize and implement in collaboration with our partner agencies.

## Public Access

Maximizing the public use of existing acreage is imperative. The Conservancy has awarded grants and supported projects for sustainable infrastructure improvements on acres of public land throughout the Parklands. The projects will reduce vehicle miles traveled and make the Baldwin Hills Parklands a convenient destination for underserved visitors approaching from adjacent parks, communities and public transportation stops.

### Transit to Parks:

In May of 2019, Los Angeles Metro published the *Transit to Parks Strategic Plan (T2P)*. The plan describes Metro's vision for coordinating transportation access goals and strategies at the local and county levels so people can better access the region's parks as well as much needed funding for upgraded transit to parks. Among the initiatives in the plan, the Baldwin Hills Parklands were selected for a specific priority pilot proposal. As part of the *Community to Parks Connection*, Metro Line 212 Extension is targeted for improvement for direct access to Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area from surrounding communities; including Inglewood, Lakewood, Hawthorne, and the South Bay. Route improvements would include transfer access from Inglewood transit center by increasing service levels and adding weekend bus service to the Parklands.

Engagement in the planning and execution of this priority pilot is underway in collaboration with Conservancy, LA County Regional Park and Open Space District and Los Angeles Metro's planning leadership. Metro's commitment to implementing the pilot are outlined below:

1. Designate a Metro *Transit to Parks* liaison
2. Create marketing/promotional materials for transit lines serving parks/open space – including an interactive web-based access tool
3. Outreach to Councils of Government (COGs), parks organizations, municipal bus operators, and other partner agencies to promote the Transit to Parks
4. Contribute \$1 million for grants for cities and nonprofits transit to parks programs – to be done in conjunction with the [L.A. County Regional Park and Open Space District](#) (RPOSD)
5. Pursue funding for Transit to Parks activities; including providing grant writing assistance to eligible partner agencies and non-profit organizations
6. Collaborate with L.A. County Parks and Recreation Department to document data on park access
7. Incorporate Transit to Parks in the NextGen Bus service reorganization
8. Make recommendations on integrating transit-to-parks into 28 by 2028 and Measure M project planning

The planning efforts of T2P will identify new mobility investments for the Parklands such as off-site parking; regular shuttle connections from the Metro's Expo Line to the regions park amenities; improving walkways, sidewalks, shared-use paths, and trails which are the most fundamental elements of a pedestrian network. Public Access improvements will contribute to the character and identity of the Parklands and will be complimented with climate resiliency infrastructure such as cooling stations, rest areas, shade, age-friendly seating, as well as bicycle storage.

### **Park to Playa:**

The Conservancy and its partners in the Los Angeles County Second District will celebrate the completion of the first regional trail in Southwest Los Angeles County by the close of 2020. The installation of the La Cienega Pedestrian Bridge this September will finish the 13-miles of contiguous trail connecting the Stocker Corridor, Reuben Ingold Park, Norman Houston Park, Kenneth Hahn SRA, Stoneview Nature Center, Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook and Culver City Park to the Ballona Creek Bike Path, and finally to the Coast. The Park to Playa Trail establishes a seamless corridor with a strong sense of place that connects upland urban residents with California's coast and wetlands. Implementation of this long-term infrastructure improvement demonstrates a successful collaboration of the region's partners to help improve local access and mobility while reducing carbon emissions and improving public health.

## **Habitat Restoration**

Three plant communities native to Southern California are found in the Baldwin Hills Parklands: coastal sage scrub, riparian woodlands and grasslands. Existing healthy natural habitat areas are located on the steep slopes and canyons on the exterior faces of the east and west ridgelines. These existing areas are presently separated, creating habitat islands. Restoring a total of 300 acres to mend habitat fragments can increase re-colonization rates of flora and fauna, thereby improving long-term viability of existing native species. Working in partnership with local education institutions, County and State Parks, the Conservation Corps, non-profits and community volunteers, the Conservancy will focus its efforts on coordinating and funding projects that address preservation of species biodiversity throughout the Parklands.

Non-native and invasive plant mapping, suppression and eradication are the first phase of the Conservancy's habitat restoration efforts. The work is time-sensitive and seasonally dependent. Targeted areas include highly visible corridors leading into the park and on the most popular trail sites. All work is currently being coordinated with departments that have jurisdictional control or management responsibilities for their respective properties.

Projects of immediate interest include the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, at the northern tip of the western ridge of the Baldwin Hills, the Stocker Corridor on the eastern end of KHSRA and the East and West La Brea Greenbelts. The habitat on each of these properties was severely degraded prior to acquisition. The Conservancy continues the process of restoring land at these sites through grants to groups such as the Los Angeles Audubon Society, Northeast Trees, California Conservation Corps, and Los Angeles Conservation Corps. Significant visual results continue to be achieved over the course of the past five-year term. Ongoing efforts will complement the current improvements managed by State and County Parks and will include the following ongoing programs:

- Removal of non-native plant species
- Re-vegetation of degraded areas with native habitat
- Urban forestry
- On-site propagation of native plants
- Development of a weed management plan
- Invasive species GIS mapping
- Creation of California friendly landscape buffers between habitats and pedestrian thoroughfares
- Inventory wildlife and habitat areas
- Involving the public in protecting and restoring natural plant and animal communities

## **Storm Water Management & Recycled Water Infrastructure**

The Conservancy's plans for water infrastructure improvement are based on our region's water resource management goals to help mitigate the toxins and pollutants released into the watershed. The Porter-Cologne Act, a policy focusing on protection of the water quality in the state through regulation of all activities and factors that affect it, is one of the guiding documents impacting County and City stormwater management. Through this policy, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) set forth regulations specifically for facilities that discharge water directly into watersheds. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits (NPDES), and waste discharge requirements (WDRs) are examples of the regulations already being utilized within the Parklands to combat the continued degradation of water quality. The Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) has placed focus on collaborative efforts between water managers in the region, defining a clear vision and direction from which to accomplish sustainable management practices for our water resources.

As water demands continue on a substantial upward trend, innovative practices must be implemented to keep pace with these escalating needs. Renewed water allows us to conserve, and maximize our resources, helping to create a sustainable water table supply for Los Angeles County.

Plans for bringing recycled/renewed water to the Parklands are being conducted in collaboration with West Basin Municipal Water District (MWD). MWD completed the first planning stages for the Kenneth Hahn Park Recycled Water Pipeline Feasibility Study in May of 2019. The study investigates the cost and timeline for an estimated \$10 million in initial funds to connect the Parklands with the existing recycled water distribution station approximately 4-miles south of the area near Florence Avenue Inglewood. The proposed first phase connection to KHSRA and the Inglewood Oil Field (IOF) has a purple pipeline length of 22,000 ft. KHSRA's infrastructure improvements would include a one-million-gallon storage tank and retrofitting of the park with purple pipe for irrigation and related water feature use. The IOF currently has purple pipe irrigation installed for recycled water delivery pursuant requirements pursuant of the Baldwin Hills Community Standards District Zoning Ordinance. The Second phase would go North into Culver City and the City of L.A., with the third phase heading west, to supply the local cemeteries and possibly West Los Angeles College.

The Conservancy will continue to implement projects that combat the effects of drought, capture pollutant laden storm water run-off, and contribute to groundwater recharge. Utilizing Low Impact Development (LID) projects with green infrastructure techniques, the Conservancy can continue setting the standard for parks in the region, while providing a guide for urban communities to follow. These developments can help raise awareness, bolster stakeholder participation, educate, and set the bar for how the next generations will think about water.

The Conservancy will allocate funds from the Proposition 1 and Prop 68 Bond Funds to implement projects with a goal of delivering sustainable water conservation and climate change adaptation projects in the parklands over the next five years. Funding will include multi-benefit projects which promote stewardship through community activation; from educational programs promoting water infrastructure improvements such as the Recycled Water Pipeline to the Parklands and surrounding cities; to interpretive signage demonstrating each project's function in relation to climate change adaptation. Current resiliency projects contain features to help divert, capture, and treat run-off; as well as promote groundwater recharge. The Milton Green Street Project is one example of only three (3) innovative "Green Streets" in Los Angeles which will serve to redirect highly contaminated first flush storm water toward Vegetated Stormwater Curb Extensions (VSCEs) with the purpose of urban greening, flood management and ground water recharge.

The Conservancy has made it a priority to educate stakeholders and solicit proposals for California's recent Water Bond mandates highlighting the following programmatic elements:

- Watershed adaptation projects to increase climate resiliency

- Smart irrigation
- Habitat restoration
- Increase wildlife corridors
- Eradication of invasive plants
- Mapping and monitoring of native flora and fauna
- Storm water capture and infiltration
- Protect and increase the economic benefits arising from healthy watersheds
- Restore urban river greenways
- Implement fuel treatment projects to reduce wildfire risks
- Increase tree canopy

## **INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION**

### **Science:**

Providing opportunities for outdoor education and use of the Baldwin Hills and Ballona Creek as living laboratories are among the primary management goals of the Conservancy. The Conservancy can serve as a unique bridge to raise awareness and understanding of how state-directed watershed preservation efforts, including land acquisition, habitat restoration, and water quality enhancement, relate to communities that exist in Los Angeles' urban core. Working with a range of education partners, the Conservancy developed an Environmental Interpretation Initiative focused on serving the needs of area students and teachers beyond the classroom.

Over the past five years, the Conservancy has successfully implemented a Conservation Studies Certificate Pilot Program in partnership with Los Angeles Audubon Society, West Los Angeles College and Dorsey High School. A successful stewardship and workforce development pipeline has been facilitated through the Initiative's curriculum and education modules for science education in the Parklands. The measured outcomes include over 2900 service hours with nearly 100 participants working in the Parklands during the last two seasons of the program. Additionally, opportunities in post-secondary education for science, planning and landscape architecture as well as new jobs in teaching and program leadership have helped to quantify the investment in the pilot program.

Interpretive modules for the Baldwin Hills, Playa Del Rey and Venice Beach continue to be created by the Conservancy's non-profit partners, specifically for elementary, middle school and high school students. Using the outdoors as a teaching resource, the Parklands are available to serve students and teachers in LAUSD Local Districts D, G and I, and Compton, Inglewood and Culver City school districts. Local teachers can facilitate student understanding of statewide environmental concepts and issues, and how they relate to students in the inner-city. The curricula fosters an awareness among students and their teachers that park habitats are dynamic ecosystems, increase knowledge about the impact humans and human behavior have on an urban ecosystem, promote stewardship of the land, and encourage students to make informed decisions about improving the environment. Specific class modules include science investigations, environmental action projects, cross-cultural and literacy activities.

### **Cultural Arts:**

Collaborative opportunities are also available for implementing new cultural events with greater inroads into communities of color. The focus on Cultural Recreation and Interpretation is consistent with the Conservancy's mission and will enhance the Parkland's recreational, scenic, cultural, and educational significance. Improving access to outdoor programming opportunities within region will accommodate the vision of a recreation and cultural nucleus easily accessible to approximately 3-million residents who live within twenty minutes of this highly under-served area.

Grant resources for the arts have not been accessed in any consistent manner, particularly for performances in KHSRA. Many events have been programmed in the western part of the Parklands through the efforts of Culver City's Cultural Affairs Commission. The series of events at the Scenic Overlook were sponsored in part by the California Arts Council, Sony Pictures Entertainment, BMI, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, Los Angeles and County Community Impacts Arts Grants.

**Partners of the Parklands (PoP)** is a non-profit organization created to assist in accessing much needed resources for programming to address the underserved neighborhoods, schools, and community organizations surrounding the Baldwin Hills. Programming concepts in 2019 have included:

- LA Opera in the Park
- Movies in the Park
- Outdoor Concert Series
- Shakespeare in the Park
- Hike to Yoga
- Astronomy in the Park

The Conservancy's outreach and community building has been initiated in partnership with PoP. The objective is to develop community through programs in the Parklands. Outreach to key stakeholders including area schools, churches, community groups and associations will help build the necessary constituency to support an ongoing robust cultural program. A stakeholder advisory group will be established to assist in bringing a consistent theme of programming to reflect the needs and desires of the surrounding communities. This group will help bridge cultural gaps and infuse local creativity into proposed concepts.

## SUMMARY OF FIVE-YEAR GOALS AND EXPENDITURES

Program	Objective	Units	Approximate Cost
Conservation	Land Conservation	135 Acres	\$9,300,000
Planning and Development	Resiliency and Stormwater Management	4 Projects	\$4,000,000
	Habitat Restoration	1 Project	\$500,000
	Sports Complex Improvements	1 Projects	\$500,000
	Mobility and Public Access Infrastructure	2 Projects	\$2,000,000
Interpretation and Education	Resource Stewardship & Interpretation Projects	2 Projects	\$500,000
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,800,000</b>