



Recalibrating the Forgotten Tributaries and Neighborhoods of the Upper Los Angeles River

Sunday, November 21, 2021

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Session Overview

The Los Angeles River has been the subject of many revitalization efforts since as early as the late 1980's. While these efforts to reimagine the Los Angeles River are important, it's tributaries and the communities within it's watershed have been largely forgotten by these various studies and projects. There are 1.1 MILLION people living within ½ mile of the tributaries selected for this plan, many of them in disadvantaged communities. The Upper Los Angeles and Tributaries Revitalization Plan creates a new community-driven, multi-agency coordinated vision for this watershed. This session will explain the political and historical origins of this ambitious plan, development of the plan, and the next steps to design and implementation.

Learning Objectives

1. Planning on a watershed scale; An understanding of the historical context and political processes that set this plan in motion.
2. Sifting through opportunities; how the ULART team focused our resources on projects that best exemplified our shared goals and objectives.
3. Ambitious proposals and measuring outcomes; how the imminent threat of climate change, flood risk, water scarcity, and economic disparity pushed the Plan to be both ambitious and calculated in its visions.
4. Next steps and implementation; how this plan can catalyze change and the road to implementation.





Monica Rodriguez – LA City Councilwomen, LA City District 7

Monica Rodriguez became the third Latina in the City's history to serve on the Los Angeles City Council in 2017, to represent the district she's called home her entire life. Her first-generation experience and family history is the foundation of her lifelong work to ensure equitable access for disenfranchised communities, holding a deeply rooted belief that everyone deserves an opportunity to succeed. As Chair of MRCA's Upper Los Angeles Rivers & Tributaries, she led the creation of a regional plan, creating a recreation and conservation blueprint for increasing access to over 1.53 million residents currently residing in park poor communities.



Mia Lehrer, FASLA – President, Studio-MLA

Mia Lehrer was born in El Salvador in a family that engaged in community leadership. Her father founded a land conservation and youth camping program aimed at helping disadvantaged youth. Her mother started a microlending program for women in the 1960s. Mia founded Studio-MLA, a design firm recognized for progressive landscape design, advocacy for sustainable and people-friendly public places, and catalyzing work for a climate-appropriate future. Mia has led the design and implementation of ambitious public and private projects including the LA NFL Stadium, the LA County Natural History Museum Gardens, Vista Hermosa Park and many Los Angeles River-related projects.



Sarah Rascon – Environmental Equity Officer, Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority

A native of Los Angeles and fluent in Spanish, Rascon worked in the non-profit sector and in government having worked for the California State Assembly prior to becoming the Urban River Program Officer with the MRCA. Rascon oversaw the development of the of the Upper LA River & Tributaries Revitalization Plan and has since been appointed to the inaugural position of Environmental Equity Officer where she is tasked with building coalitions to advance access to natural resources, with an emphasis on marginalized communities.

