

June 28, 2011

USACE:

In regards to the proposed pilot program for kayaking/canoeing in the Los Angeles River within the Sepulveda Basin, the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society has the following serious concerns.

1. The program is targeted to begin in early June while there is still significant nesting activity of Blue Grosbeak, Yellow Breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, Black Crowned Night Herons, Bullock's Oriole, etal in the riparian habitat immediately adjacent to this section of the River. If the project is approved, we recommend a start date no earlier than July 15 to prevent what would undoubtedly be a threat to their breeding success.
2. The activity at the put-in, take-out, and portage or midway stopping points would disturb the soil and vegetation at those areas and create easily accessible areas for non-program illegal and unsafe activities that are already a major problem in the Sepulveda Basin due to the lack of manpower for proper patrols.
3. This would set a highly visible precedent for boating in the River and would create the appearance that the public can now bring their own watercraft to recreate at will. Signs stating otherwise would be ignored and destroyed as they have been in the adjacent Wildlife Area where there has been absolutely no enforcement of posted regulations.
4. Inadequate attention has been given to parking, restrooms, and accessibility (all of which are non-existent or illegal) at the entry and exit points.
5. The Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee, the California Native Plant Society, and the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, all of which have a 20-30+ year history of active public involvement with this section of the Los Angeles River, have not been consulted or advised of this proposal until the final week for comments when an article was noticed in the local paper.

Thank you for considering our concerns. We would appreciate being kept updated as to the status of this proposal.

Kris Ohlenkamp
Conservation Chair
San Fernando Valley Audubon Society