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NEWS

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Communities Gather to Envision a Clean and Green San Gabriel River

Norwalk, April 16- The Sierra Club Angeles Chapter will be presenting the goals and projects of its San Gabriel River Campaign to local residents at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex at 7pm. The Sierra Club hopes to engage river communities in envisioning and advocating for a cleaner, greener San Gabriel River. Guest speakers include Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, South Gate Mayor Hector De La Torre, Executive Officer of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Belinda Faustinos, and LA County Public Works Watershed Engineer Rama Tallamraju in addition to Sierra Club staff and lead volunteers.

“The campaign would like to see the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo be transformed into an integrated network of native plants, flowing water, and parks for the benefit of wildlife and as a gathering point for residents. Eventually, we would like to see the primary character of the San Gabriel River be that of a river, rather than simply a flood control channel,” said Campaign Chair Jeff Yann.

Angeles Chapter Conservation Program Coordinator Johanna Zetterberg adds, “we are looking for opportunities to create open space for recreation, healthy habitat for wildlife, and to recharge groundwater supplies with cleaner river water. We envision a green belt along the

River all the way from the mountains to the sea, with protective natural areas next to the River and parks next to neighborhoods – an easy walk from home.”

The San Gabriel River Campaign is a priority of the Angeles Chapter. It is a proactive campaign that partners with key community stakeholders such as conservancies, public resource agencies, other environmental non-profits, elected officials and local residents to transform the River. Yann will give a presentation of Campaign projects local to the area at each meeting.

Mid-River Campaign Vice Chair Sam Pedroza said, “we want to empower communities along the river to join us who also want a beautiful park next to a clean river. We think there are lots of people out there who share the Sierra Club’s values but don’t necessarily identify with the label “environmentalist.” It is these people we are trying to reach; it is their vision we want to hear about.”

The campaign is creating a new organization called “Amigos de los Rios” which will specifically do outreach to Latino communities along the river. “We will be announcing the birth of Amigos de los Rios at these meetings, and letting people know we are hiring a bilingual organizer to head this up,” said Zetterberg.

Other upcoming meetings in the series include:

April 22 (Earth Day), Azusa – special guest Congresswoman Hilda Solis, Azusa Auditorium, 7pm

April 24, South El Monte – special guest Assemblywoman Judy Chu, South El Monte High School, 7pm

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