



# FRIENDS OF THE LA RIVER

## **River Advocacy 101 - A Toolkit**

For 30 years, FoLAR has helped bring the River back to life through effective advocacy. Our success relies on the army of advocates and environmental stewards that stand, call, write, and mobilize with us. This toolkit empowers YOU to advocate for the River issues that matter the most to you and your community. This Toolkit will provide you a step-by-step guide in raising an issue and getting your voice heard.

Step One: Identify the Issue and the Jurisdictional Authority

Step Two: Contact the Jurisdictional Authority

Step Three: Contact Your Elected Officials (and FoLAR!)

Step Four: Take A Stand on Public Record

### **STEP ONE: IDENTIFY THE ISSUE AND JURISDICTIONAL AUTHORITY**

The Los Angeles River and its banks are maintained by as many as half a dozen agencies along a single stretch. Maintenance to ensure serviceability of the channel structures during times of flood is primarily the responsibility of the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) or the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LACDPW), depending on location. We frequently refer to their work and jurisdiction as “in-channel” referring to within the channel walls of the River. [Map attached here.](#)

Maintenance provided by the Corps and the County includes clearance of debris and weeds; repair of damage of the walls; maintenance of fencing and access roadways, bike paths, and landscaping; graffiti removal and eviction of homeless encampments (following due process that requires posting signs for several days in advance before police removal).

Beyond maintenance there are several agencies that have jurisdiction in areas adjacent to and within the LA River. These include (but are not limited to):

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB)
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO)
- Amtrak, Metrolink, Union Pacific, BNSF
- Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP)
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC)
- San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC)
- And many others...

## **STEP TWO: CONTACT THE JURISDICTIONAL AUTHORITY**

City and County agencies are the tasked with being the first line of defense in case of issues or problems on the LA River. We've included phone numbers and websites to the most helpful information. Your first step is to reach out, raise your issue and ask for information about the authority's current plans to rectify the situation. We recommend you submit your issue in writing via email or through the agency's official reporting system and follow is with a phone call. Submitting it in writing begins to create a public record that may be useful in the future.

### **In case of emergency:**

In case of emergency, flooding, threats to life, illegal dumping, and other conditions threatening the immediate safety of the community: CALL 911

### **For other in-channel River issues:**

[US Army Corps of Engineers:](#)

General Info: 1-213-452-3333 or [LA River FAQ](#)

LA River maintenance issues: 1-626-401-4000 or [LA River Webpage](#)

Send your questions to or sign-up to get updates: [AMOperations.Branch@usace.army.mil](mailto:AMOperations.Branch@usace.army.mil)

[Los Angeles County Department of Public Works](#)

Report a problem: <https://dpw.lacounty.gov/contact/>

Bike Path Map: <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/pdd/bike/map.cfm>

For questions about Bike Path Closures: <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/bikepathclosures/>

For maintenance/graffiti issues on Bike Path: 1-800-675-HELP (800-675-4357)

For illegal or hazardous waste dumping:  
call 911 immediately, or 1-888-CLEAN-LA (1-888-253-2652)

[Los Angeles County Flood Control District:](#) The River Channel is managed and maintained by the LACFCD which is a part of the Department of Public Works.

Contact for general questions: (626) 458-4304

Contact the Water Resources Division: (626) 458-6120

[City of Los Angeles](#)

General River Info: [LARiver.org](http://LARiver.org)

Maintenance problem in parks: [Department of Recreation and Parks](#) 1-818-756-8190

Illegal dumping into storm drains: 1-800-974-9794

Hazardous waste dumping: 1-888-CLEAN-LA (1-888-2532652)

Maintenance issue on bike paths: Contact LA County Department of Public Works

### **For Non-Emergencies:**

Los Angeles Police Department: 1-877-275-5273

LA County Sheriff's Department: 1-800-222-8477

### **STEP THREE: CONTACT YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE (and FoLAR):**

If you find that your issue has not been resolved by taking the steps above, it may be time to get your elected representative involved. We recommend you write a letter or an email to your representative. Be sure to copy FoLAR ([contact@folar.org](mailto:contact@folar.org)). This serves two purposes: 1) we want to know what the River community is concerned about. You never know, we might be able to join forces! 2) Visibly copying us (or any other community organization) may win you a swifter response. Strength in numbers!

In the State Legislature: <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>

In the County Board of Supervisors: <http://rrcc.lacounty.gov/OnlineDistrictmapApp/>

In the City of Los Angeles: <http://neighborhoodinfo.lacity.org/>

NOTE: in the City of Los Angeles there is an Arts, Entertainment, Parks and River Committee chaired by [City Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell](#). Mayor Eric Garcetti also has an [LARiverWorks team](#). For your River issues within the City of Los Angeles you should copy both of them.

### **STEP FOUR: SUBMITTING TO PUBLIC RECORD**

#### **Make your voice Heard.**

Your representatives want and need to hear from you. Your voice can be especially powerful when a decision that will impact the River is on the agenda of an elected body. Whether it's state legislation or a project being voted upon by the City Council or County Board of Supervisors, your voice matters. In California, the Brown Act requires that all public meetings of governing bodies post their agendas 72 business hours in advance of the meeting. Referencing the agendas will be important as you take this step in advocacy. We recommend two important actions: 1) write a letter or email and 2) show up to the meeting to participate in the public comment period.

[City Motion of Taylor Yard/G2 Acquisition](#)

In Your Local City: Find the Council File Number on the [Agenda](#) Item, Address your letter to the City Council and submit it to the [City Clerk](#). Be sure to reference the Council File Number.

[Example of a FoLAR Letter to City of Los Angeles.](#)

For the County Board of Supervisors: Find your issue on the [Agenda](#), address your letter to County Board of Supervisors and submit it to the office of [your County representative](#), the County representative that is bringing forth the agenda item, and the [executive office of the Board of Supervisors](#).

[Example of FoLAR letter to County Board of Supervisors](#)

For State Legislation: Submit your letter to [your elected representative](#) as well as to the office of the representative that authored the legislation in question.

[Example of FoLAR letter to State Legislature](#)

For commenting on River-adjacent development projects, consider using FoLAR's own Development Criteria to evaluate how a project could impact the LA River corridor.

[FoLAR's Development Criteria](#)

[Example evaluation using Development Criteria](#)