



**FRIENDS OF THE  
LA RIVER**

**2022-2027  
Strategic Plan**

# Land Acknowledgement

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The land and the River we work on is the ancestral homeland of Indigenous peoples who were dispossessed of their land. They were the original stewards of the Los Angeles River and these lands. We acknowledge our presence on the unceded territory of the Gabrieleño-Tongva, Fernandeano Tataviam, Gabrieleño-Kizh, and Chumash peoples, and are deeply grateful to the Ancestors, Elders, and Relations.



*Mary Leighton Thompson*

# Mission and Vision

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We build capacity for communities, students, and future leaders to advocate for nature, climate, and equity on the Los Angeles River. We envision a verdant Los Angeles River that supports vulnerable communities in climate adaptation. The River will be transformed into a dynamic, functioning ecosystem that reduces flood risk, cleans the air, cools temperatures, and supports the biodiversity essential to our collective wellbeing.





# Equity Statement

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The LA River traverses through diverse communities of people, plants, and geographies. It provides an opportunity to reshape our environment in a way that is more inclusive, equitable, and just. **We are committed to building a team, leadership, and a River Movement that is as diverse as the communities the River touches.** We believe in working with nature and alongside communities to achieve climate resilience, park equity, and environmental health for all.



# Our Values

(updated Oct ' 21 by internal equity committee)

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**STEWARDSHIP:** Assume responsibility for the wellbeing of wildlife and our riparian ecosystem. Diligently identify ways to practice our integrity, care for our environment, and respect the River as an arena for climate action.



**INCLUSIVITY:** Include all community members - particularly historically underserved peoples - in our programs and advocacy efforts. As a team, offer others the opportunity to grow through collaboration and mutual support. Prioritize recruiting a diversity of individuals with varying cultural backgrounds and experiences to our staff, Board, and Advisory Board.



**CREATIVITY:** Practice open-mindedness and resourcefulness to shape contemporary views of the River. New approaches can yield solutions to chronic issues. Prioritize those approaches that elevate the River in the minds of others.

# Our Values

(updated Oct ' 21 by internal equity committee)

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**AUTHENTICITY:** Practice transparency among teammates and partners, acknowledge uncomfortable truths, and conduct honest conversation to maintain our standing. Acknowledge that we are most effective when we focus on our key initiatives and carefully select our commitments with a realistic view of our capacity.



**TRUST:** Celebrate the successes of the organization and recognize the value in each team member and play to each other's individual strengths. Understand that each piece of our work is an important step towards a better future for the River. Respect that every teammate and partner is committed to the River Movement and our environmental mission.

# Expanding Our Target Audiences

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**This is in addition to our existing audiences, which we will continue to engage.**



Vulnerable communities whose health, wellbeing, and stability are most impacted by climate change and/or River restoration



Indigenous tribes Gabrieliño-Tongva, Fernandeño Tataviam, Gabrieliño-Kizh, and Chumash peoples



Intersectional organizations who work with River communities



Artists



River-adjacent Neighborhood Councils and their constituents



Underrepresented/Title I Students (K-12) + Parents





# **Our Five-Year Strategic Outcomes**





# Our Five-Year Strategic Outcomes

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We build capacity for communities, students, and future leaders to advocate for nature, climate, and equity on the Los Angeles River.

## Operate

Goal: An ecosystem of high quality board, team, and funders dedicated to deep and lasting impact.

## Educate

Goal: FoLAR's community relations and education programs continuously grow and inspire a diverse, multi-generational base of River stewards and advocates.

## Activate

Goal: FoLAR is the largest mobilizing force on the River with a base that consistently takes action for nature, climate, and equity on and around the Los Angeles River.

## A Resilient River

Ultimate Goal: A verdant Los Angeles River that supports vulnerable communities in climate adaptation - a dynamic, functioning ecosystem that reduces flood risk, cleans the air, cools temperatures, and supports the biodiversity essential to our collective wellbeing.

# Operate

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An ecosystem of high quality board, team, and funders dedicated to deep and lasting impact.

Diverse Board and Staff	<b>(1-3 years)</b> FoLAR board and staff are diverse and representative of the various populations we serve
A Team-First Culture	<b>(1-3 years)</b> Happy, supported, dedicated, collaborative team that effectively advances the mission everyday.
Diversified and Sustainable Revenue Streams	<b>(3-5 years)</b> Funders and revenue streams are diverse such that the loss of any one of them is not a budgetary crisis.

# Educate

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FoLAR's community relations and education programs continuously grow and inspire a diverse, multi-generational base of River stewards and advocates.

Action-Oriented Civic Engagement	<b>(1-3 years)</b> Youth and community take action against climate change, biodiversity loss, and the various processes threatening the River's future.
Personal Connection to the River	<b>(1-3 years)</b> Youth and community understand the connection between a healthy River and public health.
Green Workforce and Leadership Pipeline	<b>(3-5 years)</b> Youth underrepresented in the environmental movement have increased pathways into the green workforce and environmental leadership.
Future Generations of Deeply Committed Environmental Stewards	<b>(3-5 years)</b> Youth and community understand what it means to live in harmony with nature and continue to engage with and advocate for it throughout their lives.

# Activate

FoLAR is the largest mobilizing force on the River with a base that consistently takes action for nature, climate, and equity on and around the Los Angeles River.

The Largest Urban River CleanUp in the Country	<b>(1-3 years)</b> FoLAR maintains our standing as the largest urban River cleanup in the country as a key recruitment for River action and demonstration of FoLAR's political leverage
Power Through Coalition	<b>(1-3 years)</b> FoLAR has a diverse network of communities, partners, and individuals that are consistently coalesced and activated to support natural climate solutions on the River.
Personal Connection to the River	<b>(1-3 years)</b> Voters and advocates understand the connection between a healthy River, climate adaptation, and public health and take action at the local, state, and national levels to support it.
Student and Community Action	<b>(3-5 years)</b> River-adjacent communities and students are represented in climate action planning on the River.
High Participation Rate	<b>(3-5 years)</b> The majority of members, volunteers, and students take additional action with FoLAR.

OPERATE

EDUCATE

ACTIVATE

A RESILIENT RIVER



# Resilient River

The Ultimate Vision: A verdant Los Angeles River that supports vulnerable communities in climate adaptation - a dynamic, functioning ecosystem that reduces flood risk, cleans the air, cools temperatures, and supports the biodiversity essential to our collective wellbeing.

The 100 Acres is a Successful Case Study of Equity and Nature on the LA River	<b>(3-5 years)</b> The site is partially open with burgeoning biodiversity and local communities vulnerable to health impacts from extreme heat and poor air quality can benefit from shade, cooler temperatures, and improved air quality.
	<b>(3-5 years)</b> A plan for full remediation is adopted and funded, and there is a community-supported, adopted plan for concrete removal, riparian habitat restoration, and at least 100-year flood mitigation for Elysian Valley.
	<b>(&gt; 5 years)</b> The County, State, and USACE see habitat restoration and floodplain management at the 100 acres as a success and formally commit to replicating these efforts elsewhere on the River.
Community-Driven Natural Climate Solutions are Prioritized and Funded Across the Watershed	<b>(3-5 years)</b> Authorities of the River and watershed begin to adopt best practices for nature-based climate adaptation from around the world and River communities are resourced to understand and guide planning and implementation.

OPERATE

EDUCATE

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A RESILIENT RIVER