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Zoe Witt
Friends of the Los Angeles River
570 W. Avenue 26, Suite 250
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June 25, 2022

Re: Nesting Migratory Bird and Raptor Surveys, Glendale Riverwalk Los Angeles River Clean-up Site.

As requested by The Friends of the LA River (FoLAR), biologist Taylor Paez conducted a pre-event nesting bird survey along an approximately 1,620 ft (0.3 mi) stretch of the Los Angeles on June 25, 2022. The goal of the survey was to locate bird nests, observe nesting behavior, and/or demarcate sensitive habitat to avoid impacts to nesting birds and sensitive species by volunteer clean-up activities among vegetation in the Los Angeles Riverbed during the nesting bird season (February through August). During the event volunteers will walk among the vegetation in and adjacent to the river while removing trash by hand. No vegetation removal is planned. Volunteers will be instructed to avoid dense shrubs, trees, and other vegetation as to avoid any nests.

Methods: Due to the heightened pedestrian activity in the river expected to occur due to the clean-up events, the biologist concentrated their efforts towards detecting ground nesting birds, species that nest low in shrubs and herbaceous vegetation that could be inadvertently destroyed by volunteers, and species that may be more sensitive to disturbance such as heron rookeries and raptor nests.

The study area was inspected between 5:20 AM and 7:00 AM on the morning of June 25, 2022. The clean-up event in this area was scheduled for the same day, beginning at 9:00 AM. Conditions were overcast and calm, with a temperature of 55-56° F, a breeze at 1-2 mph and cloud cover of approximately 20% throughout. The biologist walked throughout the clean-up area and inspected all vegetation and structures where volunteers were likely to work. Areas not directly inspected were scanned. The survey was conducted by visually inspecting vegetation using 8x42 binoculars, concentrating on the underside of the canopy and branch forks and looking for cavities on the surface of the trunks and major branches. Additionally, the biologist observed all birds in the vicinity and watched for signs of nesting behaviors such as carrying food or nesting material.

Results: The islands in the river where the clean-up was to take place are densely vegetated. Common yellowthroats (*Geothlypis trichas*) and song sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*) were heard singing throughout, suggesting that breeding territories or nests may be present. Attempting to access to the island itself would involve climbing through/over the dense vegetation; no other accessible route was observed. Although no nests were visually observed, the breeding behavior of song sparrows and yellowthroats suggest nesting may be taking place. It is recommended that volunteers do not attempt to access the island to avoid disturbing potential nesting birds. There was no vegetation suitable for nesting underneath the freeway. No nesting raptors were detected. No active heron, egret, cormorant, stilt or other species' nests were detected.

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Photo 1: Dense vegetation along the islands at the Glendale Narrows Clean-up Site.

Recommendations: It is my recommendation that the following occur:

1. Provide staff to offer guidance to volunteers prior to beginning as well as during clean-up activities to avoid stands of cattails, willows, and other dense vegetation that may contain nesting birds.
2. Volunteers may clean up trash around the islands but should not be allowed to climb through the vegetation to access the islands within the rivers.
3. Encourage volunteers to take note of any bird behavior that may indicate the presence of a nest (broken wing display, alarm calls, dive bombing). If volunteers observe this behavior, it is recommended that they avoid the area and alert staff monitoring the site during the clean-up.

It is my professional opinion that these procedures are adequate to prevent the inadvertent destruction of nests and avoid disturbing raptors, heron rookeries, and nesting birds by clean-up activities. The results of this survey were discussed with Zoe Witt (Operations Manager, FoLAR) and an alternative activity was planned for the volunteers if there was insufficient trash surrounding the islands.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Taylor Paez

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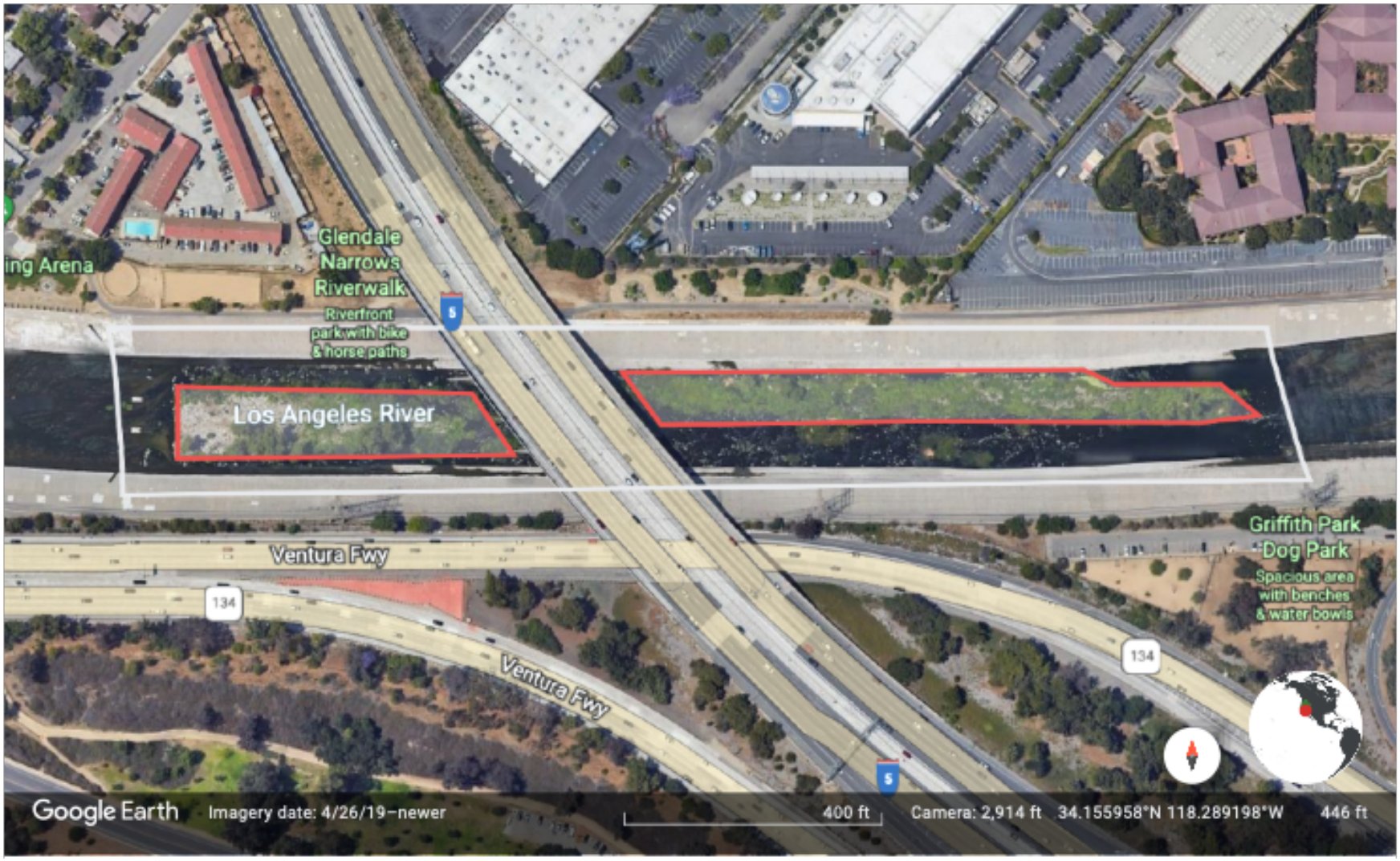

Figure 1. Map of Nests within the Glendale Narrows Clean-up Site. The clean-up site is marked in gray. The areas outlined in red were densely vegetated with cattails, willows, and other plant species at the time of the survey. It is recommended that these areas are not accessed by volunteers during the survey.