From Our Executive Director

As I reflect on 2021, I am humbled. I ended my first year at Nature for All feeling proud to be part of a team that consistently rises to challenges and never loses sight of our mission.

Through in-person and virtual platforms, Nature for All facilitated our Leadership Development programs in a way that increased connections and relationships with community members, coalition partners, and collaborators.

We were encouraged to see high participation in our programs and activities throughout Los Angeles County! Our next step is to leverage the interest and passion to scale up our impact and create access programming to nature, especially for park-poor communities. We believe we have laid the groundwork for an even more impactful year ahead and we thank you for your participation and support!

Belén Bernal

Our Staff

Belén Bernal, Executive Director
Azeneth Martinez, Coalition Coordinator
Omar Gomez, Program Manager
Araceli Hernandez, Program Manager
Bryan Matsumoto, Program Manager
Anakaren Ramirez, Communications Coordinator

Our Supporters

We are grateful for the support of:
- Accelerate Resilience L.A., a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
- Anonymous and individual donors
- Angeles Conservation Foundation
- Best Start San Fernando Valley
- California State Coastal Conservancy
- Charities Aid Foundation of America
- City of Duarte
- Community Nature Connection
- Congresswoman Judy Chu, 27th Congressional District
- Community Project Funding
- El Nido Family Centers
- First 5 Los Angeles
- Garfield Foundation
- Hispanic Access Foundation
- Justice Outside
- Pacific Premier Bank
- Parks California
- Resources Legacy Fund
- Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) Co-op
- Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment
- San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC)
- San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- Sierra Club
- Trailmixer
- The Pew Charitable Trusts
- The Wilderness Society
- Water Foundation
- Watershed Conservation Authority

From Our Board of Directors Chair

We have learned during the last two years how vulnerable we—and our global systems—are. At the same time, the pandemic has revealed how great humanity can be when we come together and support each other to prioritize our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

This impact report is a testament to our collective community. We hope you’ll take a moment to read about our successes in 2021 while we worked with community.

Nature for All is stronger because of you and your support. Your belief in our vision—that every person has the right to experience and access meaningful connections in the outdoors—will continue to shape how Angelenos relate to, recreate, and protect nature as they learn more through our programs and activities. Thank you for allowing us to partner with each of you in this journey!

Vanessa Aramayo, Alliance for a Better Community
Casey Schreiner, Modern Hiker
Charles Thomas, Outward Bound Adventures
Thomas Wong, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

From Our Board of Directors

Belén Bernal

Thomas Wong
From Our Coalition Chair

In 2021, as communities slowly recovered and we saw light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we were determined to continue our work. It became even more clear how vital it is to create opportunities to ensure equitable access—for all Angelenos—to the wide range of benefits nature can provide. Through our All Aboard for Nature program and with outings for youth and families into the San Gabriel Mountains, we have thrived in the face of adversity.

Embracing the resiliency and continued strength of our communities, we continue to grow as a coalition and strengthen our collective commitment to connecting diverse low-income communities to nature and environmental stewardship opportunities.

For our San Gabriel Mountains campaign, we saw the impact of our grassroots community base-building by getting newly appointed Senator Alex Padilla to make the passing of the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act one of his priorities. We believe that the San Gabriel Mountains deserve to have an Urban National Recreation Area along the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Corridors, which would serve one of the most diverse communities in the country.

The work of seeing this vision a reality will continue through our policy and leadership development work, which will ensure that we are building the next generation of environmental leaders for our San Gabriel Mountains and for the planet.

Our Mission and Focus

Nature for All’s mission is to build a diverse base of support to ensure that everyone in the Los Angeles area has equitable access to the wide range of benefits that nature provides. We’re committed to building support to protect and create access to our forests, rivers, and parks, and developing a new diverse generation of environmental leaders and stewards who connect to, and care for, our public lands.

We advocate for policies, projects and programs to:

Protect the mountains and rivers in our area, to conserve habitat and water resources, and to be more climate-resilient.

Create more natural spaces, such as parks and bike paths, in our historically underserved neighborhoods.

Connect people to public lands through transit access programs and improved recreation facilities, which will lead to better public health.

Honoring Leadership

We would like to offer a special thank-you to Belinda Faustinos, who played an integral role in our development and growth during the many years she worked with our coalition and when she served as our first Executive Director. Her dedicated efforts were celebrated this year when she received a commendation from the County of Los Angeles.
Leadership Academy

Nature for All’s Leadership Academy is a long-term training program, established in 2011, that aims to develop LA’s next generation of environmental leaders with a curriculum that teaches organizing and advocacy skills, civic engagement, and supports local community projects. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we were thrilled to continue the program virtually and mark its 10th anniversary! We are so proud of our staff and coalition for this milestone and their contributions to help educate, train and develop community leaders to become environmental stewards and join us in our mission. It has been inspiring to see more than 220 graduates continue to support our mission by completing projects they proposed while in the program, and in their jobs and volunteer efforts.

One of the goals of the Academy is to diversify the environmental field. I am so proud to see our graduates feel empowered to apply and land amazing jobs in roles they may not have seen themselves in before!

—Program Manager Araceli Hernandez

Our Future Leaders

- **77%** Participants identified as low-income
- **68%** Participants identified as women
- **57%** Participants identified as Latinx
- **90%** Participants identified as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color)

Congratulations to 2021 Graduates!

- Alondra Reynoso
- Ana Cobarrubias
- Evellyn Rosas
- Amy Quintanilla
- Anakaren Andrade
- Jacqueline Arevalo
- Jaice Mendoza-Macias
- Kris Fortin
- Krystle Yu
- Maura Palacios Mejia
- Kathryn Melendez
- Montserrat Flascencia-Bernal
- Nadia Sadeghpour
- Nicole Greco
- Oscar Monge
- Rosa L. Maldonado
- Shabnaz Marzinka Khandoker
- Samantha Avitia
- Valeree Catangay
- Robert Aceves

2021 Leadership Academy Highlights

- Evellyn Rosas and Krystle Yu worked with Nature for All and Arlington Garden in Pasadena to lead Nature Relations, a multilingual (English, Spanish, and Mandarin) in-person guided audio tour for youth and their families that included a nature journal.
- Ana C. launched her project, Environmentalists of South Central LA, to bring environmental education to South Central LA Youth.
- Sam Tayag and guests presented family-friendly virtual workshops in partnership with the LA County Natural History Museum.
- Maura Palacios presented “Watering Our Future” workshops with Pacoima Beautiful.
- Josh Anduj shared Tongva history and stories relating to the plants and land during an event organized by Community Nature Connection.
**Community Base-Building and Community Leadership**

With education and training, our Community Base-Building program is empowering community members and providing them with skills and knowledge. As Community Ambassadors, they are helping us increase the equitable distribution of public funds to communities in need of parks, access to public lands, and water and climate resiliency.

“We are supporting environmental justice ambassadors in the communities that need the most help. This program develops leaders and builds community knowledge, community support, community engagement, and community power to bring about necessary change. This knowledge means power for our communities who use these much-needed tools and skills that go beyond Nature For All programs.”

—Senior Program Manager Omar Gomez

**2021 Highlights**

- Extended our reach beyond the San Gabriel Valley to the San Fernando Valley and Southeast Los Angeles.
- Recruited, developed and trained 23 new Community Ambassadors from all across LA County to provide community presentations and offer outreach by tabling at events.
- Provided a Leadership Development training to 41 of our Community Base-Building graduates, who learned about public speaking, community organizing, leadership and power, and civics.
- Offered 26 workshop series of Community Base-Building classes on local park needs, water resiliency, protection of public lands, civics, and opportunities to increase park equity in underserved communities.
- Hosted a Water Warriors workshop series, in partnership with the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, to educate community members on the history of water in LA County, where our water comes from, and how families and communities can become more water-resilient.
- Led community members for first-time visits to Lewis Falls, the North Fork of the San Gabriel River, Switzer Falls, East Fork, Eaton Canyon and Glendale Narrows, and other locations for our Mountains and Parks Watershed Tours.

**Nature for All Stewards**

Our Nature for All Stewards club, made up of Leadership Academy graduates and other volunteer supporters, continued to organize events, including virtual #WildLABookClub events and an in-person gathering to help community members swap outdoor gear and resources. A special note of gratitude to Stewards Machiko Yasuda and Max Ogden for their hours volunteering to build the Trail Angeles website, a partnership sponsored by REI: www.trailangeles.org

**Community Ambassadors Spotlight**

- Community Ambassador Miriam Lagos led a Sun Valley training with 23 residents, which included a tour of the Sun Valley Park Drain and Infiltration system to learn about nature-based solutions and parks.
- Rossana Palencia and Ulmira Loza held a virtual event on nature and mental health, "Naturaleza y la Salud Mental."

Attendees at our classes, courses and workshops

Participants at our hikes, events and projects

“I learned that there was a concerted effort to protect it and make nature more accessible to everybody, including low-income families and communities of color.”

—Jackson Lam, Leadership Academy graduate from cohort 4
Making Connections: Creating Access to Nature

The pandemic has made clear how the mental and physical health of those in our communities is tied to having access to the outdoors, and has widened the divide between those who have access to nature and those who do not. To correct this environmental injustice, we must work to connect our investments in public transportation—the Metro Gold Line, bus and active transit system—to our public lands, the San Gabriel Mountains.

“Nature-deficit disorder is a serious urban issue with rippling societal effects. Poor health and low interest in environmental issues are the result of environmental injustice and disinvestment in underserved communities’ access to nature. Transit to Trails programs are powerful, multi-benefit investments that yield great returns—planting the seeds for urban children to keep exploring and become emotionally and physically healthy, curious citizens of the world.”

—Program Manager
Bryan Matsumoto

2021 Highlights

- Our vision for public transportation shuttles to the San Gabriel Mountains received a major win with Congressmember Judy Chu’s inclusion of $995,000 for funding through the House Appropriations Committee.
- Worked with Congressman Jimmy Gomez on the Transit to Trails Act, which was introduced with Senator Cory Booker in the House and Senate, to promote equitable access to parks, green spaces, and public lands and waters.
- Organized a tour into the San Gabriel Mountains for the California Natural Resources Agency, with Secretary Wade Crowfoot and Deputy Secretary of External Affairs Andrea Ambriz, which showcased the amazing work by San Gabriel Valley partners and included a bike ride on the Emerald Necklace. Many coalition members shared their stories and highlighted regional needs for state investment in community access programming—transit-to-trails, urban greening, and green workforce opportunities.

Community Education course members enjoyed our San Gabriel Mountains, River and Parks Watershed tour.

Coalition member organization Day One asked youth advocates to share why we need access to parks.

51% of Los Angeles residents do not have a public park or open space within walking distance of their home.
Leading The Way

Working to ensure that all of our community members have equitable access to nature comes with the responsibility to care for our public lands, including our beloved San Gabriel Mountains and rivers.

“Nature can nurture our hearts, minds, and bodies, and inspire community members to cherish it and become the environmental stewards needed to help us protect it.”

—Executive Director Belén Bernal

2021 Highlights

- Joined Senator Alex Padilla, Congress members Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, Salud Carbajal, and Jared Huffman for a press event to support the final House vote on The Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act package of bills to protect one million acres of public land and more than 500 miles of rivers in California.
- Continued our leadership in the Our Water LA (OWLA) coalition, by providing input on project prioritization for Round 2 of the Safe Clean Water Program (Measure W) funds, and facilitating a meeting with Mayor Garcetti to urge his support of OWLA principles and advance efforts to fund 10x10 (10 projects in 10 years for LA County).
- Our coalition engaged more than 9,000 community members to sign our petition to protect public lands through our well-coordinated outreach, at orientations, tabling events, virtual events, hikes, and leadership trainings.

70% of LA County’s open space is in the Angeles National Forest/San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and 80% of water provided to San Gabriel Valley residents comes from our San Gabriel Mountains.

Supporting Policies

Reached thousands by participating with our coalition in communications efforts to engage public support for vital legislation and policies:

- Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act
- America the Beautiful Plan (Biden-Harris) to conserve and restore lands, waters, and wildlife; increase equitable access for outdoor recreation; create local parks, especially in cities and nature-deprived communities; protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030 to address the climate crisis and ensure that future generations can enjoy nature.
- Protecting Unique and Beautiful Landscapes by Investing in California (PUBLIC) Lands Act (Senators Alex Padilla and Dianne Feinstein) to expand protections for more than one million acres of California’s public lands, including our San Gabriel Mountains and rivers.
Engaging Communities: Connecting Virtually and In Nature

100 million U.S. residents don’t have a park within a 10-minute walk from home.

"People really want to make a difference. Sometimes, all we need is a leader."
—Joel Glen, Leadership Academy graduate from cohort 12

Coalition members and staff in the short Latino Outdoors documentary, "Yo Cuento: Nurturing Grassroots Advocacy for Conservation."

Quick Guide to California Native and Drought-Tolerant Plants

Latino Conservation Week event with staff, coalition and community members, held at Audubon Center at Debs Park. Thank you to Audubon!
Our Story Continues

2021 • Organized press conference to celebrate Senator Alex Padilla’s introduction of the PUBLIC Lands Act, with Tongva leader Chief Anthony Morales, LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis, Congresswomen Judy Chu and Grace Napolitano, California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot, and other environmental and community leaders

2020 • Developed program vision to provide transit access to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument/Angeles National Forest for diverse, underserved communities

2019 • Launched our Leadership Development Program by adding a San Gabriel Valley component; assumed fiscal responsibility for the Leadership Academy; provided input on Prop 68 Access Programs, and Measure A, M & W implementation policies (parks, water, transportation)

2018 • Worked to cultivate grassstops and grassroots support for a potential Harris Senate companion bill; supported local and state measures for water and parks, including a leadership role in the OurWaterLA coalition

2017 • SGMF re-branded as Nature for All (N4A), as we reflected on our expanded campaign plan to include policy objectives for parks equity, access, and water resilience

2016 • Leadership and engagement by San Gabriel Mountains Forever (SGMF) contributed to policy successes in the development of two major funding measures for parks and transportation (that passed in 2017)

2015 • A3PCON, Amigos de los Rios, COFEM, the Wilderness Society, Community Hiking Club, the Sierra Club and SGMF were affirmed as members of the San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative

2014 • Introduction of San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area bill by Congresswoman Judy Chu; proclamation by President Obama establishing San Gabriel Mountains National Monument

2013 • Supported the recommendations in the study by water agencies, the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments and a host of elected officials

2012 • 10,000+ comments generated for the San Gabriel Mountains and Watershed Special Resource Study by the National Park Service

2011 • Introduction of a Wilderness bill by Congressman Dreier

2010 • David Dreier Wilderness Legislation organizing efforts expanded

2009 • SGMF mission continued to be refined in planning meetings to reflect social justice, resource protection, and legacy objectives

2008 • San Gabriel Mountains Forever launched a planning meeting including the Old-Timers Foundation, COFEM, the Project Amiga, LA Voice, the City Project, Sierra Club, TWS, FOR, Campaign for Americas Wilderness, Progressive Christians Uniting, and the California Wilderness Coalition

Our Focus in 2022

• Increase access and connect more people to our public lands and open spaces via our transit-to-trails All Aboard for Nature program and shuttle project concept-design work

• Continue to advocate for the protection of our public lands and natural spaces to fight climate change for this and future generations

• Train more community members and youth throughout the county and empower them to become environmental stewards and leaders

• Support local, state, and federal legislation to help our communities thrive and be represented in the process

“My work on the San Gabriel Mountains means I’m leaving something for the future. It means I’m being a good ancestor.”
—Brenda Kyle, Leadership Academy graduate from cohort 4
Together, we can achieve environmental justice, increase equity, and provide more access to nature for our diverse communities. Thank you for following our progress and supporting our work!

www.lanatureforall.org

Follow us on social media

@LANatureForAll

Sign our petition

Help us protect public lands!
www.lanatureforall.org/take-action

Sign up for our newsletter

Stay informed about our work and events!
www.lanatureforall.org/newsletter

Donate!

Your gift of any amount can help us continue to increase access to nature and help us develop the next generation of environmental leaders!
www.lanatureforall.org/donate

Nature for All is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. FEIN: 83-1265253
201 W. Garvey Avenue, Ste. 102-503 Monterey Park, CA 91754