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## Newest park in city helps clean water

BY RICK ORLOV, Staff Writer  
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City officials on Wednesday opened the first of several freshwater parks designed to treat polluted water runoff and make it suitable to add to the groundwater system.

The parks also will provide space for non-aquatic recreational activities along the Los Angeles River.

The first, Marsh Park, is a half-acre facility in Elysian Valley, a heavily industrial and residential area north of downtown.

"Marsh Park isn't just a beautiful place to sit down and look at the river," City Council President Eric Garcetti said. "Beneath its attractive surface is a hard-working friend of the environment, filtering urban runoff before it gets into the river and on to our beaches."

The project - a joint effort by the city, county and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy - is the first step in an overall plan to reclaim the 51 miles of the Los Angeles River to provide more recreation opportunities.

Marsh Park was developed to collect water runoff from neighboring streets where the dirty water - much of it containing motor oil, brake dust and insecticides - is deposited into a collection area, where it is naturally cleaned and put into the groundwater system, officials said.

A test of the system during recent storms showed the park worked as designed by collecting rainwater and allowing it to seep into the ground.

Native plants have been located within the park to help with the water filtration and to encourage the return of birds, mammals and insects to the area.

Funding for the park, estimated at \$1.8 million, came from all three government agencies, with work performed by the California Conservation Corps.

The park is adjacent to the area of the river known as the Glendale Narrows and has a natural bottom as opposed to the concrete floor that covers much of the river.

"Marsh Park is a model for every public property near the Los Angeles River," said Joseph Edmiston, executive director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

"While cleaning polluted water runoff from city streets before it goes into the river, we bring nature back into neighborhoods and create parkland and recreational opportunities."

Officials said they hope to see other water parks created along the river.

[rick.orlov@dailynews.com](mailto:rick.orlov@dailynews.com)

(213) 978-0390