Image 1

Comprised of a 15-acre lake and 14 acres of surrounding park space, Echo Park Lake is tightly wrapped by multi-family residential, places of worship, and the 101 Freeway. This site diagram illustrates the rehabilitation project's improvements including new lake edges and liner, constructed wetlands, revitalized planting, habitat enhancements, new pathways and furnishings, and LED lighting. It was Echo Park Lake's first complete overhaul in its 120-year history.

Image 2

A designated Historic-Cultural landmark because of its "Picturesque" landscape style, some of the park's defining characteristics include long views across the lake and gently winding pathways flanked by palm allees. Effort was made to preserve such existing features as well as re-create the gently curving geometry that had been lost over time.

Image 3

Various park features also contribute to the park's status as a Historic-Cultural landmark and convey a strong sense of place. A steel and wooden footbridge, dating back to the 1930's, was preserved in place. Additionally, the WPA-era "Lady of the Lake" statue was restored and returned to its original, prominent location at the lake's peninsula after many years of neglect.

Image 4

This once-iconic Los Angeles view had been drastically altered in the years prior to the rehabilitation project due to the disappearance of the lake's historic lotus bed. Project designers, engineers, and biologists worked with lotus experts to optimize conditions for the return of the lotus, and worked closely with aquatic growers to ensure the selected material and planting methods would yield a bountiful bloom. This image shows the new lotus bed, with downtown Los Angeles in the background.

Image 5

A series of seven interpretive signs help to inform park visitors about the rehabiliation project, the site's history, park stewardship, and the function of the lake's new wetlands. The sign content and graphics were designed as a collaborative effort between the project's landscape architect and environmental graphic designer. This sign depicts the history of the lake's famous lotus plants.

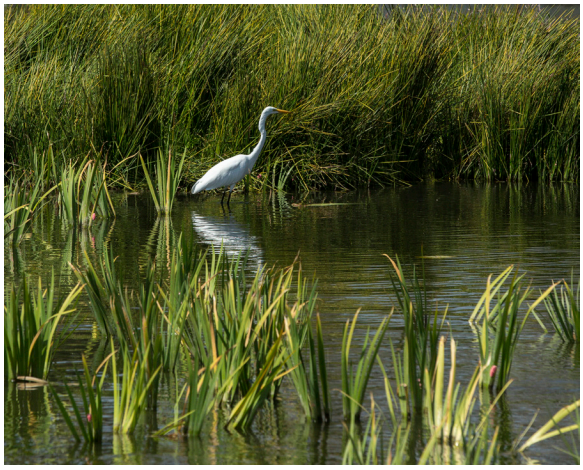

Image 6

Almost four acres of wetland planting was carefully integrated into the project with the primary purpose of naturally treating stormwater runoff that enters the lake through City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles storm drains. The project re-configured lake inlets to accept dry-season flow (typically the most polluted of flows) at a volume intended to offset evaporative loss, minimizing potable water use. Secondarily, the added aquatic planting provides additional wildlife habitat for both domestic and migratory water fowl.

Image 7

In addition to treatment potential, the selection of aquatic plant material and layout of the wetlands took into consideration the preservation of key views, in-lake recreation (as seen in this image), and the needs of fisherman who take advantage of catch-and-release fishing.

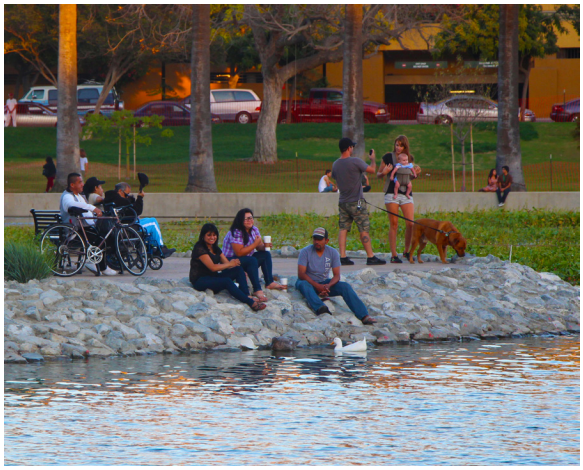

Image 8

The design team studied images and descriptions of the lake throughout its historic period of significance (1870-1943) to determine an approach to re-building the crumbling lake edges. Balancing safety, cost, aesthetics, and historic inegrity, three types of edges were ultimately integrated together: vertical concrete walls, rock banks, and vegetated slopes—each creating a different relationship between park users and the lake.

Image 9

Turning eyesores into amenities, two existing utilitarian stormwater inlet structures were modified to incorporate boardwalk features and lake overlooks. Once avoided by park visitors, these areas now serve as special nodes around the lake.

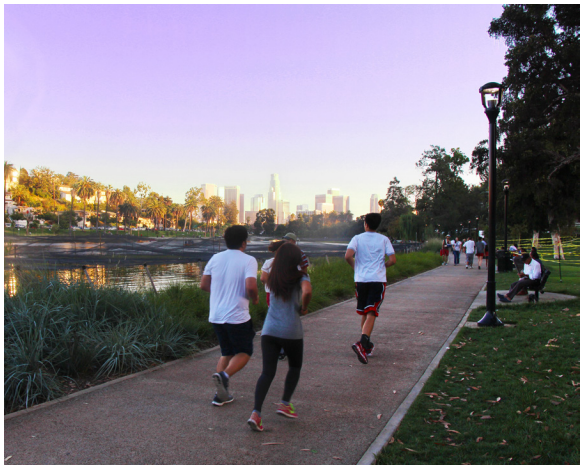

Image 10

With sustainability a high priority for both the design team and City of Los Angeles, the project includes porous concrete paving paths (replacing asphalt), drought-tolerant planting (of similar form to the park's historic palette), and pedestrian-scale LED lighting (replacing high-pressure sodium cobra-head lights). The park's grading was also slightly modified to reduce the direct flow of runoff and sediment into the lake.