



# NEWS



For immediate release:  
May 15, 2008

Contact: Kerjon Lee  
Office: (626) 458-4348  
Mobile: (626) 476-0533  
kelee@dpw.lacounty.gov

## **Marie Canyon Water Quality Improvement Project Experiences Temporary Set-Back**

One of the many casualties of the Canyon Fire of October 2007, the County's Marie Canyon Water Quality Improvement Project is shut down, for now, due to pump failure.

MALIBU, CALIF. (May 15, 2008) – A water quality treatment facility, brought on-line by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District just weeks before Malibu's devastating Canyon Fire, has run into mechanical difficulties. Following a series of winter rain storms, charred embers, vegetation, and debris became lodged in the facility's intake pumps, eventually clogging the system and prompting County personnel to take it off-line, intermittently, for repairs.

"Winter storms have caused a significant amount of burned vegetation, debris, and mud to flow down the watershed and into the system," said Assistant Deputy Director Mark Pestrella of the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works. "Our intake pumps were designed to handle debris and sediment loads that would typically collect within this rural watershed, but our system was simply overwhelmed by the volume of charred vegetation produced by the fire. Public Works staff have already ordered replacement pumps and will install them as soon as they are delivered."

The system is expected to go back online in June.

Shutting down the system resulted in several elevated bacteria readings at Malibu's Puerco Beach, a location that held the dubious distinction for several years of being one of the state's worst beaches for water quality. When it was first introduced by County and city officials on October 11, 2007, the dry-weather runoff treatment system, developed by Clear Creek Systems, showed immediate results in reducing viruses and bacteria at Puerco Beach. Within the first month, fecal coliform, enterococcus, and other indicator bacteria were reduced by 99.9 percent.

###