



Habitat Enhancement Work Continues

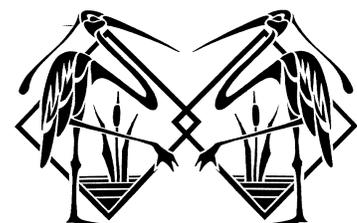
Big T protects one of the most rapidly-diminishing habitat types found in southern California—willow riparian woodland. Since 2000, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LADPW) has been implementing a Master Mitigation Plan to restore and enhance habitat for native plant and animal species at Big T. Upcoming projects to continue the implementation of the Master Mitigation Plan include:

- ◆ **Exotic plant removal**—Weeding on the upland portions of the site continues to remove weed competition and allow native species to thrive. Poison oak is also being removed along the trails.
- ◆ **Exotic aquatic wildlife removal**—Exotic species, such as bullfrog, crayfish, and largemouth bass, are being removed using specialized nets, traps, and other methods. These exotic species harm native aquatic species by competing for the same food or being predators

of native species.

- ◆ **Water quality monitoring**—Water samples are collected at Big T quarterly to address water quality issues from upstream land uses. In particular, excessive nutrients or pesticides in the water could affect aquatic species at Big T. Testing to date indicates that the chemical parameters are not a concern at Big T because they do not exceed the state drinking water standards.
- ◆ **Community outreach**—Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings are held twice yearly, and are an excellent opportunity for the community to meet with LADPW staff to find out the current status of programs at Big T and to bring up any issues of concern. The next CAC meeting will be held on September 25, 2008 (see the announcements on page 2 for details).
- ◆ **Trails use and maintenance**—A trails maintenance day was held on May 17 (see page 3). LADPW is

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works' implementation of the Final Master Mitigation Plan for the Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Area (Big T) has been under way since April 2000. Big T is a 207-acre parcel of land located in the City of Los Angeles' Sunland area (see map on page 4). The site was purchased by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works in 1998 for the purpose of compensating for habitat loss for other LADPW projects. Big T protects one of the most rapidly-diminishing habitat types found in Southern California—willow riparian woodland. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an update of ongoing programs and to explain the upcoming enhancement measures that will be implemented on the site in the next few months. Newsletters will be published on a bi-annual basis (Spring and Fall).



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Announcements

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in the process of having signs fabricated for the site, and posting is scheduled to begin in the middle of September. Uses that are compatible with the habitat enhancement at Big T are hiking and equestrian use on established trails. Incompatible uses include: any use of areas off of established trails, wheeled vehicles (including bicycles and ATVs), boating, fishing, swimming, hunting/shooting (including paintball guns), trash dumping, plant harvesting, release of animals, off-leash dogs, and overnight camping.

- ◆ The next Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting is scheduled for September 25, 2008 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Hansen Yard, 10179 Glenoaks Blvd., Sun Valley, CA
- ◆ Please notify LADPW if you notice holes in the fences, new trails being cut through vegetation, dumping of trash/debris, or any other activities that may be detrimental to the value of this natural area. Contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.
- ◆ The construction of rock dams in the creek is detrimental to native fishes because the pools that develop behind the rock dams become breeding grounds for non-native species. If you see any rock dams in the creek, please notify LADPW so that they can be removed.
- ◆ A fence encroachment issue between neighboring homes and the south boundary of Big T has been resolved, and restoration activities will soon be occurring in this area.

Kid's Corner

What a Sucker!

There's a "sucker" at Big T—the Santa Ana sucker, a little fish. The Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*) is a fish native to streams in the Los Angeles Basin in southern California, including at Big T. These "suckers" are not related to the "sucker fish" that are commonly found in freshwater aquariums, which are native to central and south America. The Santa Ana sucker has large lips and a small mouth that lets it "vacuum" its food from stream beds. Adult Santa Ana suckers are about 6 inches in length and have dark, blotchy backs with silvery colored undersides.

The Santa Ana sucker has been identified as a "threatened" species by the federal government. This means that the species could become endangered (in immediate danger of becoming extinct) if it is not protected. They have become threatened due to loss of habitat and competition from species that are not native, meaning they would not naturally live at Big T. Non-native species, like pet-store turtles and aquarium fish, can eat food usually eaten by the Santa Ana sucker and other native species, and can introduce exotic diseases. Work is being done to remove non-native plants and animals from Big T. You can do your part to help protect the Santa Ana sucker and other native species: **PLEASE DO NOT release your pets at the Big T site.**



Photo by Paul Garrett, USFWS

Fourth Annual Big T Trails Maintenance Day

The Fourth Annual Big Tujunga Mitigation Area (Big T) Trail Maintenance Day was held on May 17, 2008. Community volunteers, ECORP Consulting aquatic biologists, and Los Angeles County Department of Public Works' (LADPW) staff attended the event. The focus of the event was trash removal in the upland, riparian, and in-stream areas.

ECORP's biologists provided guidance and support during maintenance activities to ensure safety and protection for the Santa Ana sucker, the arroyo chub, and the Santa Ana speckled dace present in Haines Canyon Creek.

ECORP's biologists removed trash in approximately one mile of the Hanes Canyon Creek at the Tujunga Ponds. The community volunteers and LADPW staff focused their trash removal efforts on the trails in the upland and riparian habitats.

The approximately 15-person crew, working from 8 am to noon, collected and removed several large tires, a bundle of razor wire, plastic crates, and more than 20 bags of trash.

The Fourth Annual Big T Trails Maintenance Day was a success thanks to all of the hard work from the volunteers. And, a special thank you to Andrea and James Gutman and Barbara Tarnowski for helping with event coordination and preparation.



Just a few of the volunteers from this event were: (from left to right) Andrea Gutman, James Gutman, Debra Mader, Valerie De La Cruz, Barbara Tarnowski, Pat Wood, Patricia Davenport, and Belinda Kwan (taking photo).



Trash waiting to be collected at the Cottonwood entrance.



Water Resources Division
County of Los Angeles
Department of Public Works
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Alhambra, CA 91803

Where is Big T?

Downstream of Big Tujunga Canyon, right in the heart of Sun Valley south of the 210 freeway, you'll find a native riparian (water loving plant) natural area filled with cottonwoods, willows and pools of water that support many native aquatic species. Check out the Big T website for more information at:

<http://www.ladpw.org/wrd/facilities/>



Emergencies? Incidents? Questions?

- **CALL 911 TO REPORT ANY EMERGENCY SUCH AS FIRE OR ACCIDENT**
- Please **DO NOT** use 911 to report minor incidents or regulation infractions. Contact the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD's) non-emergency number at (877) ASK LAPD or (877) 275-5273.
- In the case of an emergency situation (those where 911 is involved) please make a follow up call to the Department of Public Works as soon as possible at the numbers listed below.*
- Do not attempt to enforce regulations. Contact LAPD to handle the situation/incident.

* For emergency follow up or to report minor incidents, obtain information, or get questions answered during weekday work hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:50 p.m., Monday through Thursday), please contact:

Ms. Belinda Kwan

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County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
900 S. Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803
Phone: (626) 458-6135
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* After work hours or on weekends, please contact the Department of Public Works at (626) 458-HELP.