



suspicious activity around our kiosks. We would like these kiosks to remain as pristine as possible. Please report any vandalism to Jason Pereira.

### PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings continue to serve as an effective communication avenue between the Project Team and the local community. CAC meetings are held on a quarterly basis. Topics discussed at the meetings included safety concerns during habitat restoration efforts, status of all wildlife programs, and other site maintenance issues. Representatives from various community organizations

attend these CAC meetings. Feel free to contact Mr. Jason Pereira at the number listed below if you would like more information on who your local CAC representatives are.

As most of you already know, Council Member Joel Wachs is leaving in October 2001. With his resignation, we may lose Patricia Davenport as a City contact. Thus, we would like to thank Pat Davenport for all of her hard work and involvement with our efforts at Big T! Her dedication has had such a positive impact on our CAC meetings and our efforts to improve the site.

### Upcoming Newsletter

The next Big T Wash Line will be published in December 2001. The main focus of that newsletter will be to update everyone on the results of the restoration efforts taking place in the fall. The December 2001 newsletter will also include information on the programs you can look forward to in 2002.

### Announcements

Be sure to spread the word about respecting the cowbird traps. The trapping program is meant to help bolster our native bird populations and will enhance the Big T Mitigation Bank site!

Be sure to spread the word about breaking down the cobble dams in Haines Canyon Creek. Since plantings are scheduled for the fall season, please be sure to stay on designated trails and not disturb newly planted areas.

### How to Contact the Public Works or Report an Incident on the Site:

In case you see an emergency (such as a fire or accident) occurring on the site, please dial 911 and report the incident right away. Please make a follow-up call to the Public Works as soon as possible. **Please DO NOT use 911** to report minor annoyances! To report an incident to the Public Works during the weekday work hours or to obtain information please contact:

**Mr. Jason Pereira**  
Water Resources Division  
County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works  
900 S. Fremont Avenue  
Alhambra, CA 91803  
Phone (626) 458 - 6138  
Fax (626) 979-5436  
E-mail jpereira@dpw.co.la.ca.us

In the case of an emergency situation (those where 911 is involved) that occurs after work hours or on weekends, please contact the Public Works at: (626) 458 -HELP. Otherwise, minor annoyances should be reported to the Public Works during work hours: 6:30 AM to 5:15 PM, Monday through Thursday.



Water Resources Division  
County of Los Angeles,  
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The Los Angeles County  
Department of Public  
Works' (Public Works)  
implementation of the  
Final Master Mitigation  
Plan (MMP) for the Big  
Tujunga Wash Mitigation  
Bank has been underway

since April 2000. 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  
continue to be published  
quarterly in 2001 and  
twice a year in 2002  
through 2005.

### Status of our various Enhancement Programs

#### Mitigation Banking Agreement

Revisions to the draft Mitigation Banking Agreement have been completed and submitted for negotiation with the California Department of Fish and Game. Public Works anticipates the City of Los Angeles to prepare a Street Vacation Report, for the requested vacations of Cottonwood Avenue and Wheatland Avenue, by mid-September 2001. This report will then be submitted to the City's Public Works Committee for review. The Committee's recommendations will then be forwarded to the City Council for conditional adoption.

For those first time readers, a Banking Agreement is a binding agreement between Public Works and the various agencies involved. The Agreement describes Public Works' responsibilities related to the habitat restoration and stipulates how the Big Tujunga Wash Mitigation Bank can be used to offset impacts of other Public Works projects. Furthermore, the Agreement explains the long-term management and identifies the agency or conservancy group who will become the long-term caretaker of the bank site.

#### Water Monitoring

#### Exotic (Non-Native) Wildlife Removal and Fish Monitoring

Since the March issue of the Big T Wash Line, our exotic wildlife removal

specialists, Dr. Dan Holland and Dr. Camm Swift, conducted two fish sampling and removal efforts, one in May and one in July.

The native fishes are restricted to Haines Canyon Creek and are most abundant in the downstream portion of the creek. Because the sampling was conducted after the reproduction period in May, many of the native fishes that were captured were young-of-the-year (YOY). The following table summarizes the results of the native fish sampling conducted in July.

Native Fishes Found During July 2001 Sampling Efforts	
<b>Santa Ana Sucker</b>	<b>445</b>
<b>Arroyo Chub</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>Speckled Dace</b>	<b>32</b>

The fish sampling also resulted in the removal of a significant number of non-native aquatic wildlife species. The following table summarizes the non-native removal efforts conducted in May and July. Please note that table includes the total numbers of non-natives removed by all methods.

Removal of these non-native fishes and crayfish improves the habitat for the native fishes by removing predators and competitors for the food resources. Currently, one of the main problems in the

Non-Native Wildlife Removed During May & June 2001 Sampling Efforts			
PERIOD	MAY	JUNE	TOTAL
Red Swamp Crayfish	772	1,552	2,324
Large-Mouth Bass	1,982	393	2,375
Bullfrog	190	201	391
Mosquito Fish	241	-	241
Other Exotic Fish	4	1	5

stream is an increasing number of man-made boulder dams where people are damming up the stream in order to get across. This is creating a significant problem for the exotic wildlife removal effort because these dams create ponded habitats where non-native aquatic species can flourish. These ponded areas favor the non-native species. Where the stream naturally flows over cobble, the native fish are doing well and the non-natives are not as abundant. The native fish species don't survive well in the ponded areas because they are either eaten by the non-native species or they can't compete for food.

#### Upcoming Actions

Crayfish and exotic fish removal will be conducted on a continual basis as necessary, for the next five years. The next sampling is scheduled for September.

#### How You Can Help

We desperately need your help in taking apart these rock crossings or asking hikers not to create them. The

ponds created by these dams are serving to increase the numbers of non-native species and this is making the effort to improve the habitat for the native fishes much more difficult. Also, please continue to spread the word that stocking the Tujung Ponds with fish, bullfrogs, or turtles is strictly prohibited as it defeats our exotic wildlife removal efforts in the Ponds and is detrimental to our native fish population.

### Restoration Efforts

#### Riparian Habitat

Natures Image (the subconsultant implementing the native habitat restoration, maintenance, and exotic plant removal) is continuing to spray the giant reed (*Arundo donax*) and remove the water hyacinth that has grown back. As stated before, these nonnative plants are very aggressive and will need re-treatment as necessary throughout the 5-year MMP period.

Many of the willow and mule fat cuttings that were planted in February have sprouted new leaves, and are doing really well, especially in the wet areas near the Water Trail. However, some of the cuttings have been damaged by equestrians or hikers walking through planted areas rather than staying on the trails. We are now making efforts to better identify the trails in the restoration areas. Please take care not to knock down any "sticks" as you are riding or walking in the areas around the Ponds. We have asked Natures Image to conduct monthly site visits in order to clear obstacles and to trim overhanging vegetation along the trails so that they are easier for horses to pass through. Natures Image also removes trash and debris during these monthly site visits in addition to conducting the exotic vegetation removal maintenance efforts.

Chambers Group's Restoration Specialist has just completed the success monitoring surveys in the habitat restoration areas. In addition, the functional analysis surveys have also been completed. These surveys are designed to identify whether the habitats on the Big T site are improving for wildlife (including the native fishes). The functional analysis takes into account everything from the density and structure of the plant communities and the amount of organic matter on the ground to the number of sensitive species of wildlife on the site. This will be done each of the 5 years of the MMP period and the results will be compared to each of the previous year's results. If you want to know more about the functional analysis, just ask us.

#### How You Can Help

You can expect to see some planting in the riparian areas in late fall or early winter (possibly around November or December). These plantings will mainly occur in the downstream areas of Haines Canyon Creek. Signs will be posted around areas where crews are working. The newly-planted areas will be delicate and walking or riding into them will disturb the growing plants. Please pass the word on to your fellow users of the site. Your help and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

#### Upland Habitat – Cottonwood Area

Other than the periodic weed removal in the Cottonwood Area, this upland habitat is in a maintenance and monitoring period. Upcoming restoration efforts in the upland area include possible replacement planting of laurel sumacs in late fall (possibly October or November). Signs will be posted around areas where crews are working. Next spring, you should expect to see lots of flowering plants in the upland area. Of course, that's if we can keep ahead of the hungry gophers!

## Brown-Headed Cowbird Trapping Program

The brown-headed cowbird trapping and removal program was completed in mid-July. The program resulted in



the removal of 70 of the parasitic brown-headed cowbirds (37 males, 24 females, and 9 juveniles). These capture totals were pretty good considering there were only 7 traps distributed around the Big Tujung Wash Mitigation Bank and surrounding vicinity. One of the most notable successes of the trapping program at Big T this year was the fact that only one non-target bird died in the trap. Non-target birds are the native bird species that enter the trap to gain access to the food and water. Many cowbird trapping programs have a hard time keeping a low non-target mortality rate (the number of birds, other than cowbirds, that die in the traps).

The biggest problem we had was continual vandalism on two of the traps. The types of vandalism ranged from damage to the side panels to killing of the decoy cowbirds in the traps.



Because of this vandalism, these trap locations will be relocated in future years. The brown-headed cowbird trapping and removal project will run from March 15 through July 15 for the next 4 years.

We would like to thank Eddie Milligan, Royan Herman, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for allowing us to place cowbird traps on their property. Your help and cooperation really helped to make this year's trapping and removal program a success!

They have a chance to develop mature seed heads, so there should be considerably less weeds in the area next year. Some of the seeded species have appeared, and the constant removal of weeds will encourage the seeded natives to grow.

#### Upcoming Restoration Efforts

Spraying and removal of the exotic plants will be ongoing as necessary for the duration of the 5-year program. Planting in the downstream areas of Haines Canyon Creek will occur next winter. Signs will continue to be posted around areas where crews are working.

#### Vegetation Success Surveys

In order to determine the success of the exotic plant removal and habitat restoration efforts, a Restoration Specialist will be conducting plant transects (a transect is a measured line, usually 50 meters) to count the numbers and species of plants and to determine the height and percent cover of the native plants. These surveys will begin in October 2001.

### Trails Reclamation and Maintenance

Several efforts have been made to maintain and improve the trails system. Once a month site visits are conducted by Nature's Image and consist of monitoring the habitat restoration as well as clearing overgrown vegetation from the trails. In addition, Chambers Group biologists met with CAC members, Carol Roper and Andrea Gutman, to re-establish the trails, mainly for equestrian use, but also for foot traffic. Identified areas where problems with the trails needs to be addressed were flagged (pink flagging with black polka dots). The trails were in pretty good condition despite several overhanging trees, left-over

tires, and downed chain link fence. Trail maintenance is ongoing and consists of vegetation and debris removal along the formal trails.

### Trails Dedication

Public Works is proud to announce that a Trails Dedication ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday, September 26, 2001. Supervisor Michael Antonovich, the media, CAC members, and many other people who been involved in the creation of the Mitigation Bank have been invited to this event. In preparation for the ceremony, the kiosks and trailhead signs will be installed. The kiosk display will include three sections, one where permanent site information including contact information will be posted, a second will include information on seasonal programs, and a third will be an area where various site users can post relevant announcements. In preparation for the dedication, Chambers Group plans to have a Big T clean-up during the two days prior to the ceremony (Monday and Tuesday, September 24 and 25). Please contact Christine Mukai at (949) 261-5414, if you would like to lend a helping hand with the clean-up effort.

#### How You Can Help

Chambers Group biologists have been working closely with CAC members on maintaining the accepted system of trails in the final MMP and eliminating several new trails that have been created by equestrians and hikers. Keep in mind that the reason it is important to remain on designated trails is because the resource agencies require the Public Works Department to restore the disturbed habitat and promote native vegetation to recolonize the area for sensitive wildlife species to use. We can sure use your help in achieving this goal. Please remember to respect any restoration signs that are placed throughout the site. Keep your eyes open for any

