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We would like these kiosks to remain as pristine as possible. Please report any vandalism to Belinda Kwan of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

Public Awareness

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings continue to serve as an effective communication avenue between the Project Team and the local community. Topics discussed have included habitat restoration efforts, status of the various wildlife programs, and other site maintenance issues such as trails signage, graffiti, and unauthorized overnight campers. Representatives from various community organizations attend these

CAC meetings. Feel free to contact Belinda Kwan at the number listed below if you would like more information on who your local CAC representatives are.

Upcoming Outreach Efforts

Beginning in 2004 and extending through 2005, the CAC meetings will be held on a bi-annual basis, once in March and once in September, usually on the first Thursday of that month. The next CAC meeting will be held on September 4, 2003 at the Hansen Dam Equestrian Center. A meeting reminder and agenda will be mailed to all CAC members and stakeholders. Elected official briefings are being conducted on a regular basis.

Upcoming Newsletter

The newsletters will continue to be published on a bi-annual basis (March and September) through 2005. The next Big T Wash Line will be published in March 2004, which will include an update on the results of our winter habitat restoration and monitoring efforts.

Announcements

- Please remember that our kiosks are equipped with a bulletin board section so that community news and events can be displayed. Please contact Belinda Kwan of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works if you would like to post community events or news.
- Keep your eyes out for replacement planting this fall which may be located near regularly used trails. Please be sure to stay on designated trails and not disturb recently planted areas.
- We would like to extend our thanks to all of the folks at the Hansen Dam Equestrian Center for their continued cooperation in letting us use their facilities for CAC meetings.

EMERGENCIES? INCIDENTS? QUESTIONS?

- **CALL 911 AND REPORT THE EMERGENCY (SUCH AS A FIRE OR ACCIDENT) 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 minor incidents, obtain information or get questions answered during weekday work hours (6:30 a.m. - 5:15 p.m. Monday through Thursday) please contact:

Ms. Belinda Kwan
Water Resources Division
County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works
900 S. Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803
Phone (626) 458 - 6135
Fax (626) 979-5436
E-mail bkwan@ladpw.org

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.



Water Resources Division
County of Los Angeles,
Department of Public Works
900 S. Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803



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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 be published bi-annually through 2005.

Who Are You Calling A Sucker?

As many of you faithful Big T Wash Line readers already know, Big T is home to many sensitive wildlife species, including the famous Santa Ana sucker. Well, maybe it's not exactly famous, but we're proud to

blotches occur on the top and sides of the fish, often with 3-5 blotches. At night these fish can appear to be completely silvery, brown, or gray. This species requires cool flowing water in gravelly or cobble-bottom streams. The permanent streams are fairly shallow and contain clear water with algal growth.



Source: Chambers Group

Haines Canyon Creek

boast that Haines Canyon Creek is home to one of the largest populations of this federally-listed as threatened fish species. In fact, Big T will be included in the critical habitat designation that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently working on.

Historically, the Santa Ana sucker occurred from near the Pacific Ocean to its current locations. In the last 50 years, it has dramatically declined, and is now restricted to the headwaters of the San Gabriel River System, Big Tujunga Creek in the Los Angeles River basin, and portions of the Santa Ana River. In addition to the

Haines Canyon Creek population, the west, north, and east forks of the San Gabriel River also support this threatened species within the Los Angeles River basin.



Source: USFWS, Paul Barrett
Santa Ana Sucker

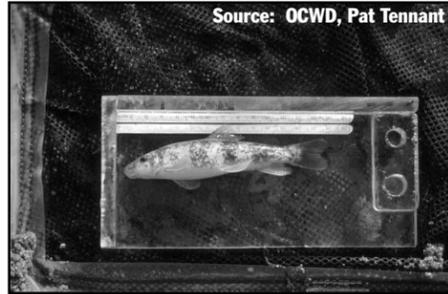
The Santa Ana sucker belongs to the family of fishes known as suckers, Catostomidae, and its scientific name is *Catostomus santaanae*. Santa Ana suckers are small freshwater fishes that reach approximately 8 inches in length. They get their name from their broad upper and lower lips that form a sucker-like mouth. They are usually colored a mottled gray or brown with occasional shades of green. These color

The Santa Ana sucker has been extirpated, or eliminated, from much of its historic range. The main threats to the survival of the Santa Ana sucker include habitat loss and predatory non-native aquatic wildlife. Introduced predatory species include exotic trouts, especially brown trout, largemouth

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bass, green sunfish, channel catfish, and bullhead catfishes. Specifically within Big T, the rock dams that trail users build in order to cross the creek are also a big threat. The rock dams create slow, stagnant water that is not suitable habitat for the suckers, but where



Santa Ana Sucker

the predatory nonnative species can flourish. The nonnative aquatic wildlife removal efforts at Big T have been successful and the fish biologists have seen a decrease in the crayfish and largemouth bass populations. This labor-intensive program requires consecutive trap nights, snorkeling, and survey transects on almost a monthly basis. You can greatly help our efforts, and the suckers, if you help to break down these rock dams as soon as you see them. You will not only be helping the Santa Ana suckers, but you will also be helping the Santa Ana speckled dace and arroyo chub, both California Species of Special Concern, that are also present within Haines Canyon Creek.

References
 Swift, C.C., T.R. Haglund, M. Ruiz, and R.N. Fisher. 1993. The status and distribution of freshwater fishes of southern California. Bull. So. Calif. Acad. Sci. 92:101-167.
 USDA 1999 Southern California Mountains and Foothills Assessment. General Technical Report PSW-GTR-172
<http://ecoregion.ucr.edu>

Wildlife Efforts

Results of Spring Wildlife Surveys

Biologists were busy conducting various wildlife surveys this past spring. Unfortunately, the surveys did not detect least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, or arroyo southwestern toad. However, the riparian habitat looks healthy and biologists observed many other breeding birds utilizing Big T.

The brown-headed cowbird trapping and removal program had very low capture rates this year. A total of 20 cowbirds were removed from the area. The low capture rate could be due to the fact that there are fewer cowbirds in the area to trap in addition to the fact that the program ended approximately 1 month earlier than usual. We would like to thank Eddie Milligan and the folks at the Hansen Dam Equestrian Center, Sommer Hawk stables, and Terri Lane for letting us place cowbird traps on their property.

Non-Native Aquatic Wildlife Removal and Native Fish Monitoring

The fish biologists observed nonnative aquatic species at continued low levels while noting some reproduction in all three native species, the Santa Ana sucker, speckled dace, and arroyo chub. Water flowed in the main wash for much of the second quarter and it was dry by the end of



Large Mouth Bass

June. In addition, releases from Big Tujunga Dam created higher than usual flows for about two weeks during May, affecting the native fish population. Native fish sampling and crayfish and exotic fish removal will continue to be conducted throughout 2003. Table 1 summarizes the numbers of exotics removed from the ponds and stream during the 2nd quarter (April through June 2003) sampling efforts.

| Numbers of Exotic Species removed By All Methods in 2nd Quarter of 2003 | |
|--|---------|
| PERIOD | Totals* |
| Bass | 226 |
| Crayfish | 947 |
| Bullfrog Larvae | 1,382 |
| Green Sunfish | 16 |

*Totals include young of the year

Native Fish Monitoring

The native fish population varied greatly with the fluctuating water flows this spring and therefore total population of the native fishes is difficult to estimate. However, all 3 native species, the Santa Ana sucker, speckled dace, and arroyo chub, are present and biologists noted some reproduction in all three fish species.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Bilingual signs that educate trail users on the detrimental effects of releasing exotic aquatic species into the Tujunga Ponds were installed this spring. Be sure to keep spreading the word that releasing pets and other

nonnative species into the Tujunga Ponds is harmful to the natural ecosystem.

As usual, please remember, if you see people creating rock crossings in the stream, politely ask them to stop. The ponds created by these dams are serving to increase the numbers of non-native species. This is making the effort to improve the habitat for the native fishes, especially the speckled dace, much more difficult.

Restoration Efforts

Riparian Habitat

The riparian habitat is still in a maintenance and monitoring mode. Natures Image (the subconsultant implementing the native habitat restoration, maintenance, and exotic plant removal) is continuing to spray the giant reed regrowth as needed during their monthly maintenance visits. The tamarisk and water hyacinth has not required retreatment, but is constantly being monitored. As stated before, these nonnative plants are very aggressive and will need retreatment as necessary throughout the 5-year MMP period.

Upland Habitat – Cottonwood Area

The upland habitat is also in a maintenance and monitoring mode. Overall, the Upland area is in good condition considering the dry conditions. However, there was some plant loss due to the lack of rain. Replacement planting may take place this fall.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Replacement planting for any areas that sustained significant cutting loss due to the dry conditions may occur during the fall. Replacement plantings may be located near regularly used

trails. Newly planted areas will be delicate and walking or riding into them will disturb the growing plants. Please respect newly planted areas and use designated trails. Pass the word on to your fellow users of the site. Your help and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Water Quality Monitoring

In order to address both upstream and downstream water quality issues at the Big Tujunga Wash site, a water quality monitoring program was implemented. The water quality monitoring program at Big Tujunga Wash shall compliment the monitoring program that is a requirement of the upstream Canyon Trails Golf Course. A successful meeting with the golf course folks, Public Works, and Chambers Group took place earlier this spring. Canyon Trails Golf Course has already been monitoring their water quality and will work with Public Works to ensure the maintenance of good water quality in the watershed.

Results

An experienced Water Quality Specialist sampled on March 20, 2003. The samples were taken to Montgomery Watson Laboratories, Pasadena, California, to be analyzed immediately after sampling was completed. Table 2 summarizes the water quality sampling conducted during the 1st quarter.

| Parameter | Summary | In Other Words |
|-------------------------|--|----------------|
| Temperature | Observed temperatures were below levels of concern for growth and survival of warm water fish species. Observed temperatures were essentially the same as in March 2002. | Good |
| Dissolved Oxygen (DO) | Dissolved oxygen levels at the three stations with flow were well above the recommended minimum for warm water species of 5.0 mg/L. Oxygen levels in the ponds were essentially the same as in March 2002. | Good |
| pH | The pH of water from all stations was within the 6.5 to 8.5 range, except Haines Canyon Creek exiting the site where the pH was 8.7. | Good |
| Total Residual Chlorine | No residual chlorine was detected at any station. | Good |
| Nitrogen | Nitrate-nitrogen at most stations was below the drinking standard of 10 mg/L. Nitrate-nitrogen at one of the duplicate samples taken at the outflow from the ponds was 12 mg/L. Ammonia was not detected at any station. | Okay |
| Phosphorus | Total phosphorus and orthophosphorus levels were present in very low levels at the inflow to and the outflow from the ponds. Total phosphorus levels in Big Tujunga Wash and Haines Canyon Creek exiting the site exceeded the EPA's recommended levels for streams (0.05-0.10 mg/L). These levels reflect the high water flow resulting from the releases from the Tujunga Dam. | Okay |
| Turbidity | Turbidity was low at both the inflow to and the outflow from the ponds. Turbidity was high in Big Tujunga Wash and Haines Canyon Creek exiting the site, reflecting the high flows. | Good |
| Bacteria | Fecal coliform levels at all stations were below the water contact recreation standard of 200 MPN. | Good |

Trails Reclamation and Maintenance

The kiosk on the haul road was vandalized again in the beginning of June. The plexiglass window and doors were damaged. However, the kiosk display boards were salvaged and should be able to be reused. Public Works is looking into having a new replacement kiosk ordered.

Efforts are continually made to maintain and improve the trails system. Monthly site visits are conducted by Natures Image. These visits consist of monitoring the habitat restoration as well as clearing overgrown vegetation from the trails. Trail maintenance is ongoing and consists of vegetation and debris removal along the formally designated trails.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Keep your eyes open for any suspicious activity around our kiosks.

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