

HABITAT ESTABLISHMENT

Site preparation started in autumn 2013, and the initial planting and seeding was completed in December 2014.

Even at this early stage (2016), 95 species of reptiles, birds and mammals (vertebrates) plus many arthropods (butterflies, bees, beetles, etc.) make this habitat their home. Several bird species, including acorn woodpeckers, have nested on the site.



American Kestrel Diving from Placed Snag

A total of 135 native plant species have been observed, and new plants and seeds are being introduced to the site. Public Works monitors and maintains the vegetation and wildlife to assess ecological performance and to ensure compliance with resource agency permit conditions. The mitigation program already meets or exceeds most of the 10-year performance standards of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.



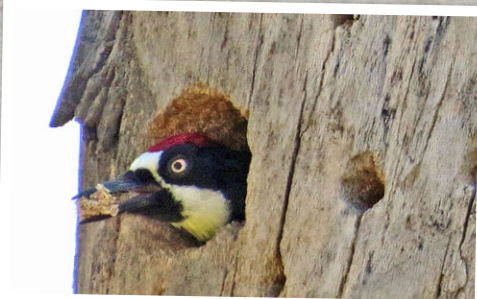
A Planted Oak Sapling Grows Among Placed Boulders and a Diversity of Planted/Seeded Native Shrubs, Wildflowers, Grasses, Ferns, and Succulents



Marine Blue Butterfly



Planted Native Fern



Nesting Woodpecker



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Oak Woodland Habitat Revegetation/Mitigation Program for the Santa Anita Dam Riser Modification and Reservoir Sediment Removal Project



Placed Natural Snags



Beneficial Fungi



Purple Clarkia



Habitat Creation on the Lower Sediment Placement Site

OAK WOODLAND HABITAT

In nature, it takes centuries to establish a flourishing oak woodland. Oak trees must have time to age and die, providing fallen logs, snags (dead, upright trees), and other organic materials that are critical to the health of the environment. Instead of waiting generations for nature to take its course, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works is implementing an innovative woodland creation plan to immediately provide these valuable habitat features.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

The State of California has one of the most robust dam safety regulatory programs in the nation. Due to soil erosion in Santa Anita Canyon, the flood control capacity of Santa Anita Reservoir was compromised by deposited sediment.



The Lower SPS Prior to Habitat Creation

Public Works moved the sediment to sites downstream of the Santa Anita Dam, and some native habitats were impacted. Environmental mitigation requirements called for Public Works purchasing and protecting existing habitat areas in the project vicinity, as well as creating an eight-acre natural oak woodland and sage scrub habitat preserve on the Lower Sediment Placement Site (SPS) in the City of Arcadia.

LOCAL BIO-DIVERSITY

Public Works used strictly local and diverse materials for the habitat creation program:

- The surface of the SPS was conditioned with tons of salvaged native mulch that was ripped into the upper two feet of soil to provide organic material.
- Natural snags were erected to entice native birds, immediately attracting hawks, owls, kestrels, and woodpeckers.



Snag Placement

- Tons of salvaged rock and woody debris were placed on the site to provide cover and shelter for wildlife.
- Native seeds and cuttings were collected in the local subwatershed to preserve the genetics of the nearby plant communities.



Propagation of Native Ferns

- Thousands of plants were propagated by nurseries that specialize in native species.
- Over 120 species of native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, ferns, and succulents were planted and seeded on the site.
- Hundreds of planted acorns (four different oak species) have germinated and are growing into healthy saplings.

HABITAT PROTECTION

A temporary wildlife-friendly fence and shaded seedling cages were installed to protect the young oaks until they are large enough to withstand herbivory by deer and trampling by bears and other animals.



Rare Oak Seedling in Protective Temporary Cage