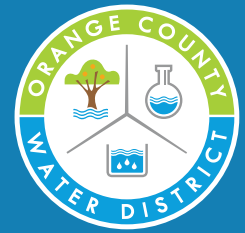


MAINTAINING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) manages the Orange County Groundwater Basin, which provides about 85% of the water supply for 2.5 million residents in north and central Orange County. The District is located at the bottom of the Santa Ana River watershed and manages its water supply in an environmentally responsible manner.

OCWD manages and protects the watershed through removal of nonnative invasive species, habitat restoration and wildlife management. OCWD owns 2,150 acres behind Prado Dam in Riverside County where it operates the Prado Wetlands, the largest constructed wetlands on the west coast of the United States.



Santa Ana River

The Santa Ana River flow, during non-storm events, consists primarily of highly treated wastewater from upstream communities.

Half of the Santa Ana River flow is diverted behind Prado Dam and is routed through a specially constructed wetland area consisting of 45 shallow natural ponds. By putting river water through the natural wetlands, OCWD has created a natural, cost-effective process for reducing nitrate levels and purifying the water for future percolation into the groundwater basin, while simultaneously creating habitat for critically endangered species.



Habitat Restoration

Prado Basin is home to several rare and endangered birds and waterfowl species. Through a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, OCWD has restored hundreds of acres of habitat for the endangered least Bell's vireo and has worked with watershed partners to fund mitigation and monitoring measures for the vireo program.

OCWD's vireo program has been one of California's great environmental success stories. The program includes restoration of vireo habitat and the trapping of non-native cowbirds that invade the vireo nests. In 1986, there were only 19 pairs of

vireo song birds in the Prado Basin. Today, the number of male territories is more than 2,000 throughout the watershed and continues to grow as more fledglings are produced and reach maturity.

OCWD and its partner agencies have jointly removed thousands of acres of the non-native plant, *Arundo donax*, that had overrun the watershed. *Arundo* is a major threat to the wildlife of the entire Santa Ana River watershed, as well as major facilitator of wildfires, and a large consumer of water.

Keeping our natural settings pristine not only protects our sensitive species but also allows OCWD to collect and store more water for Orange County.

For more information, please visit ocwd.com.

