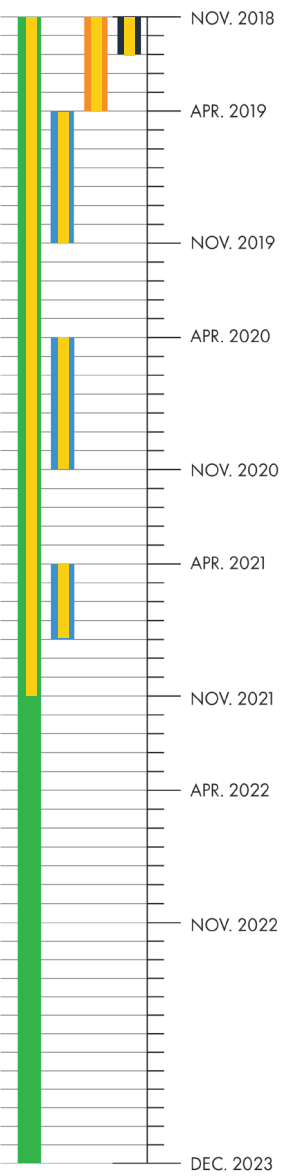




The Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project Sediment Removal is Complete!

Timeline

- Vegetation Removal – completed
November 2018 – January 2019
- Access Road Construction
November 2018 – April 2019
- Sediment Removal
April – November, 2019 – 2021
- On-site Habitat Restoration
November 2018 – December 2023
- Completed



The Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project Finishes One Year Early!

Los Angeles County is pleased to announce that the sediment removal at the Devil's Gate Reservoir was officially completed on August 10. With efficient sediment removal and favorable weather conditions, the project was finished one year earlier than planned. To reach the goal this year, Public Works removed the final 299,755 cubic yards.

The project was developed to address the impact of the 2009 Station Fire, which burned more than 160,000 acres of the San Gabriel Mountains. Subsequent storms brought more than 1.3 million cubic yards of sediment into the Devil's Gate Reservoir. Sediment removal became necessary so that the now-101-year-old dam and reservoir could again provide optimum flood protection to downstream communities and businesses in the northeast Los Angeles area. Over the next year, Public Works staff is shifting focus to the 70-acre habitat restoration area around the reservoir to continue restoring the native vegetation.

In addition to providing flood relief to communities that have endured nearly a decade of elevated flood risk along the Arroyo Seco, the project established a permanent stormwater maintenance area which will allow the County to maintain reservoir capacity on an annual basis as new sediment washes into the basin.

The County and Public Works is grateful for the community's ongoing support for the project. The Public Works team met collaboratively with the Community Advisory Committee, regional stakeholders, residents, neighbors, and businesses in the communities of Altadena, La Cañada, Pasadena, Irwindale, and Sun Valley during the work. "The County listened to your input and concerns and together we made this a successful project," said Public Works Assistant Deputy Director Steve Burger. "It could not have been done as well without all of you."



Southeast Entrance Improvement Project Community Meetings

With the sediment removal project complete, the Public Works team is seeking input to develop plans and improvements to the southeast entrance of the Hahamongna Watershed Park at La Cañada Verdugo Road. On September 27, 2021, Public Works held its first of three virtual meetings with local residents for community concerns, input, and ideas regarding the future of this area. A second meeting was held on November 15 in which Public Works presented initial plans for the entrance. The deadline for the community to submit final comments and feedback is the end of day, Monday, December 6. Based on this feedback, Public Works will present a final plan in a third meeting to be held in January. The County will remind interested community members about the meeting via email. To learn more about the upcoming meeting, visit devilsgateproject.com for more information.

Meet The New Project Manager

Los Angeles County Public Works project managers Fahim Rahimi and Mark Gim became familiar faces of the Devil's Gate Reservation Restoration Project to the community through its successful completion. Taking over as Project Manager for the remainder of the project and overseeing habitat restoration is Civil Engineer Keith Hala, P.E. Hala comes to this project with a love for the community and nearly 13 years of experience working with Public Works.

Tell us a little bit about yourself?

I live downstream from Devil's Gate Reservoir and have worked for Public Works for 13 years. Pre-Covid, I loved to travel and have visited more than 20 countries. My family is originally from New York, so I travel back east often. I love the outdoors and regularly hike and jog along the Arroyo Seco stream north of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory with my husky pup, Storm. So, I know the area not only from work on the project; I also have first-hand experience as a resident.

What experience do you bring to this project

I have worked with dams and reservoirs for more than half of my career. I used to have the title, "Stormboss," based on my role managing storm inflow, water conservation, and drinking water projects for the County. I have been involved with the rehabilitation and improvements of several nearly century-old dams, including Morris, Big Dalton, and Big Tujunga. In addition, I have worked closely with the regulatory agencies that were involved on this project. I am very familiar with the ins and outs of permitting processes.

Now that the sediment removal is complete, what part of the project will you be managing?

I will be overseeing the habitat restoration efforts over the next few years: the Altadena Drain, and the southeast entrance improvement project. I'll also help close out the project with all the regulatory agencies, updating the permits, and transitioning to the annual maintenance and operations of the reservoir.

How can community members best contact you?

Email is best: khala@pw.lacounty.gov



Ongoing Habitat Restoration and Enhancements

Now that the sediment removal project is completed, Public Works continues to dedicate its efforts on the habitat enhancement and restoration. This phase of the project will proceed throughout the end of 2022. Since 2018, Public Works began restoring more than 70 acres of quality riparian and scrub habitat within the project area. The natural habitat supports endangered birds and other native wildlife. The County has removed and will continue to remove invasive plants so that the natural habitat can thrive.

Complementing this effort, Public Works has also been recontouring parts of the reservoir to facilitate better water flow to support the growth of the new native vegetation. Team members are planting numerous seeds and seedlings, with more than 50 percent coming from the Hahamongna Native Plant Nursery. The new habitat will include tall flatsedge, various species of phacelia, California poppy, stinging nettle, mugwort, mulefat, coyote brush, black willow, red willow, arroyo willow, Fremont's cottonwood, blue elderberry, California blackberry, and many others. Weed abatement efforts will also continue for all of the restoration areas. The project team has taken great care to have as little impact as possible on the natural habitat and wildlife to not only maintain it but to plant new native plants and trees.

For More Information

To learn about the project, receive project updates or contact the project team, please feel free to contact us:



devilsgateproject.com



devilsgateproject@pw.lacounty.gov



(626) 458-2507



Shot Hole Borer Beetle

Public Works is working hard to ensure that every plant and tree within the mitigation areas inside of the Hahamongna Watershed Park are protected. This includes having an onsite biologist monitor the weed abatement efforts daily and a restoration ecologist (RE) visiting the mitigation areas on a monthly basis to ensure the native vegetation communities are healthy and thriving. The biologists and RE can identify problems, take preventative actions, and ultimately help develop the habitat.

Since August, biologists and the RE found several dead black willow trees that showed signs of borer beetle infestation including entry/exit holes, branch failure, and general dieback. Upon discovery of the potential signs of infestation, the RE alerted the Los Angeles Agricultural Commissioner's office of the findings. Experienced County surveyors collected samples of potentially infested bark to identify the species of insect causing the dieback. The surveys showed evidence of shot hole borer beetle infestation. There are low to moderate infestations throughout the mining pit mitigation area on the west side of the watershed that continue to be under observation. In addition to the beetle infestations, the surveyors have also observed evidence of bot rot (*Botryosphaeria dothidea*) in a few of the willows. This is a type of fungus that can impact a variety of tree species and is typically spread by wind and rain.

The County is working with the Agricultural Commissioner to further evaluate and solve the borer beetle infestation of the willows and other native trees. Lab results and biologist scientific advice will guide how infestation issues will be mitigated and whether any trees will need to be removed. Any removed wood will be finely chipped and then tarped to kill the remaining beetles and their larvae. Public Works will plant new trees native to the habitat as needed.

Working with the Hahamongna Nursery

Nestled in the Hahamongna Watershed Park on the site of a former Forest Service compound is a volunteer-driven plant provider that is supplying home-grown elements of Devil's Gate habitat restoration. "We are really pleased to be able to supply 3,000 plants for the ongoing restoration work," said Tim Brick, managing director of the Arroyo Seco Foundation, which operates the nursery.

"Locally-sourced plants chosen are characteristic of the area, with genetic secrets to survival in this habitat," Brick said. Native plants are well-adapted to the Southern California climate, that bring biodiversity as well as water conservation benefits. Native plants require only about 15% of the water required by more typical landscaping. The cooperative nursery is also an educational resource for the community. Staff share knowledge of how plants perform with sun, in soils, and on slopes – all important factors in horticultural success. "Wildlife like certain plants. We worked with the Flood Control District on a very careful plant list, chosen to attract beneficial species," Brick said.

"Everything is local to the Arroyo Seco. We do all our growing locally – some from seeds and some from cuttings – that are preferred by local birds, bugs, and bees," he said. "We're making a very significant difference."



COVID-19 Resources

LA County continues to urge everyone to take precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19. For the most up to date information, please visit: ph.lacounty.gov/Coronavirus/

If you have questions and would like to speak to someone, or need help finding medical care, call the Los Angeles County Information line 2-1-1, which is available 24/7.