



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Public Utilities

Wednesday, January 7, 2015

### **100-Acre Restoration Project at Upper Otay Reservoir to Improve Water Quality and Native Habitat**

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego’s Public Utilities Department is working with local nonprofit River Partners to restore approximately 100 acres around the City’s [Upper Otay Reservoir](#). The three-year project will restore five small urban streams and the main drainage to the reservoir, totaling nearly 6,900 linear feet of streambed.

A significant benefit will be that the restored drainages will ease urban runoff and remove pollutants and trash; thus, helping to protect water quality. The \$1.2 million project is funded by state and local grants.

“The Public Utilities Department is committed to improving water quality and the environment,” said Halla Razak, Director of Public Utilities. “This project is a great example of our continuing work in protecting and enhancing watersheds that connect to our reservoirs.”

River Partners will remove invasive and non-native plants such as eucalyptus, tamarisk, Giant Reed and non-native grasses. To establish healthy riparian and upland plant areas along and adjacent to the streams, the organization will plant native tree and plant species, including California sycamore, Fremont cottonwood, black willow, arroyo willow, and mulefat.

The replacement of non-native flora with native ones will enhance the habitat for many bird species of special concern, such as the cactus wren, tricolored blackbird, yellow breasted chat, yellow warbler California gnatcatcher, least Bell’s vireo, and southwestern willow fly catcher. Because eucalyptus trees are often used by hawks for nesting and perches, some large trees will be left for this purpose.

The smallest of the City of San Diego's impounding reservoirs, Upper Otay Reservoir was established in 1959 as a fish hatchery. The reservoir has been open to the public for fishing since 1996.

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The **City of San Diego Public Utilities Department** provides safe, healthful drinking water to the 1.3 million residents of San Diego, and regional wastewater treatment and disposal services for more than 2 million residents of San Diego County. More information: [www.sandiego.gov/publicutilities](http://www.sandiego.gov/publicutilities)

**River Partners** creates wildlife habitat and protects the environment by implementing large scale restoration projects along streams and rivers. More information: [www.riverpartners.org](http://www.riverpartners.org)

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