

Early Settlers

The San Gabriel River has played an important role in the development of the San Gabriel Valley. The Chumash and Tongva, known today as the Gabrielino Indian Tribe, lived along the banks of the San Gabriel River when Spanish explorers first ventured into the San Gabriel Valley. Due to the availability of water, Mission San Gabriel Arcángel was built here. This was the beginning of a human-driven transformation of the San Gabriel River. Settlers began arriving in the 18th century and cultivation of the surrounding land ensued. By the 19th century, the floodplain had become productive farmland. Year-round flow in the river ceased due to the increased irrigation demand. As the population grew, demand quickly exceeded the river's natural supply. As a result, the Los Angeles-Owens River Aqueduct was constructed in 1913 for the purpose of supplying additional irrigation and drinking water.

Taming the San Gabriel River

As populations in urban centers continued to grow and city sprawl encroached on the once wild river, more and more farmland was converted to urban land use. Major winter flooding in the 1930's prompted the creation of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District. Their objective was to tame the river, creating flood control measures to ensure the safety of the surrounding communities. To accomplish this task, a three-pronged attack was implemented.

The river was straightened and deepened by placing levees along the banks, catch-basins were constructed at strategic points along the mountain drainages, and dams were constructed in the mountains to control runoff. With ever increasing population, it has become apparent that the San Gabriel River is a vital part to the Los Angeles/Orange Basins ecosystem. As pavement and cement cover in surrounding communities increased, the ability of surface water to soak into the ground decreased increasing surface runoff. Therefore, the San Gabriel River became extremely important for flood control.

Recreation

The San Gabriel River also plays an important role in recreation for the general public. Hiking, biking, and jogging have been facilitated by the placement of paved paths from the base of the San Gabriel Mountains all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Behind the Santa Fe Dam is a lake placed in a picturesque setting with swimming and a beach for children. Golf courses and parks are found along the length of the river. Other recreational activities, such as sport fishing is also

available in a variety of mountain streams and lakes.

Wildlife

Various mammals such as coyotes, rabbits, and squirrels find refuge in wild areas of the San Gabriel River, where migratory, as well as native birds are supported by undeveloped areas of the San Gabriel River. The San Gabriel River provides sanctuary to numerous species that are endangered by urban sprawl, such as the Opossum, the only surviving marsupial in North America.

Biology

(FUTURE TEXT...)

Past, Present, and Future Plans for the San Gabriel River Watershed

In order to provide a safe recreational environment, recharge groundwater basins, restore areas damaged by urbanization, provide suitable habitat for animal and plant species, and manage flood control, monitoring of the San Gabriel River's water and its tributaries is essential. It is for these reasons that a plan proposed by the Olmsted Brothers and Harland Bartholomew and Associates in the 1930's, entitled *Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region*, has been resurrected. Their plan envisioned a network of parkways connecting the mountains and beaches along the river channels in the Los Angeles Basin. These parkways would provide flood protection, as well as wilderness and parklands for the greater Los Angeles Basin.

Several groups and agencies have pooled their talents in order to meet present and future goals for the San Gabriel River Watershed. The State of California Resources Agency, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Coastal Conservancy, the County of Los Angeles, California State University Polytechnics, Pomona, the University of Southern California, South Coast Wildlands Project, the Nature Conservancy of California, the California Wilderness Coalition, the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey, the Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species of the Zoological Society of San Diego, the U.S. Forest Service, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy, along with a host of committee members of the San Gabriel River Master Plan, including the **Friends of the San Gabriel**

