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**Forester Creek Improvements project honored as  
Public Works Project of the Year**

**Washington, DC**—The Forester Creek Improvements project was recently named a Public Works Project of the Year by the American Public Works Association (APWA). The City of Santee, Calif., managing agency, along with primary contractor Archer Western Contractors and primary consultant PBS&J, will be presented with the award during APWA's International Public Works Congress & Exposition held in September in Columbus, Ohio.

APWA Projects of the Year awards are presented annually to promote management and administration excellence of public works projects by recognizing alliances between managing agencies, contractors, consultants and their cooperative achievements. This year APWA selected 19 projects in five categories: Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair, Environment, Historical Restoration/Preservation, Structures and Transportation. The Forester Creek Improvements project received the award in the Environment category, \$25–\$75 million range.

The Forester Creek Improvements project has revitalized the heart of Santee, California. The project was originally conceived in the early 1970s as a flood control project. Over time, the project evolved into a flood control, water quality, environmental restoration, regional transportation and community redevelopment project.

The Forester Creek Improvements project, completed in June 2008 at a cost of \$40 million, has resulted in a widened and revegetated creek designed to carry a 100-year flood. The channel bed and banks were planted with more than 20 acres of new wetland and riparian habitats, making this project a model for future flood control projects in the San Diego area. Work on the 1.2-mile-long segment of the creek began in January 2006. Completion of the project and containment of the floodwaters has allowed the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to begin its extension of SR-52 through Santee to SR-67. This final phase of SR-52 will complete the east-west transportation link from La Jolla to Lakeside.

Widening Forester Creek involved extensive excavation, the relocation of sewer mains, water transmission pipelines, numerous dry utilities, and the construction of two new bridges. The creation of new native habitat, a linear park, and a bike-pedestrian pathway has transformed this flood control channel into a significant community asset. As a result of this project, Santee can now look forward to renewed commercial redevelopment along the channel banks.

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## **2/2/2 Forester Creek Improvements project**

The project's introduction of more than 4,400 feet of new wetland and riparian habitat enhances the natural and biological functions of the creek. These wetlands benefit water quality by providing for flow retention and infiltration. The reestablishment of riparian zones will allow natural filtration of pollutants. Increased riparian zones also provide an effective buffer from direct fecal coliform inputs as well as controlling, retaining and destroying fecal coliform through natural decomposition. The reestablishment of natural vegetation increases the amount of shade and effectively reduces light penetration, which in turn controls the water temperature, minimizes photosynthesis and helps to stabilize the pH levels within the creek.

The project includes a 300-foot-long riprap energy dissipater that reduces the velocity so that flows within the channel are non-erosive. The slower flow rates allow silt and other dissolved or suspended particles to settle out of the runoff waters, and then bio-degrade, resulting in natural treatment.

The existing low flow channel within the creek was protected in place while excavation outside of the channel took place. The vegetation within the low flow channel was cut to prevent bird nesting, but was not grubbed. This allowed the low flow channel to remain intact and minimized erosion during the first rainy season of construction. During the following dry season, the low flows were diverted to the newly excavated channel and the remaining grading was completed.

For more information about the projects or the award recipients, contact R. Kevin Clark, (816) 595-5230 or [kclark@apwa.net](mailto:kclark@apwa.net).

### **About APWA**

*The American Public Works Association ([www.apwa.net](http://www.apwa.net)) is a not-for-profit, international organization of more than 29,500 members involved in the field of public works. Originally chartered in 1937, APWA serves its members by promoting professional excellence and public awareness through education, advocacy and the exchange of knowledge. With 64 chapters throughout North America, APWA is headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, and has an office in Washington, D.C.*

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