

Inland Empire

Essential Investments in the Inland Empire

With California voters' strong support for ballot measures to fund conservation, our state has invested wisely in protecting our land, water and parks. These essential investments have strengthened California's economy by enhancing our environment, attracting tourists and creating jobs.

In California's Inland Empire, these investments are helping preserve California's desert habitats and providing recreation for visitors from around the world. Threatened and endangered species are protected because of public investments from voter-approved measures, and the quality and supply of water to our homes and business have been increased substantially through these investments.

Although we have made great improvements, there is still much to be done. The future of all of California — from its wide diversity of plants and animals to the wide diversity of people who live here — depends on these essential investments in the land, water and parks that make the Golden State the unique and promising place we all cherish. Among the noteworthy investments in the Inland Empire are:

SANTA ROSA PLATEAU ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

The Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve is a 2,000-foot-high sanctuary in California's Santa Ana Mountains that is home to a wide range of wildlife, plant species and a slice of California history. The 8,300-acre reserve protects unique ecosystems, including Engelmann oak woodlands, riparian wetlands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, bunchgrass prairie and vernal pools. Of the more than 120 sensitive species of plants and animals in the Inland Empire, 59 can be found on the Santa Rosa Plateau. Once threatened by over-development, the reserve now sustains scores of native and endangered species. Native wildflowers — some of which are nationally endangered — draw thousands of spring visitors. The reserve is also home to the oldest standing structures in Riverside County — bunkhouses for cowboys dating back to 1846. Funding from Proposition 40 has helped keep this special place around for generations to come.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA INTEGRATED WATERSHED PROGRAM

The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) developed the Southern California Integrated Watershed Program to alleviate dependence on imported water during drought years. It is a series of projects that has generated more than 300,000 acre-feet of water — enough to serve 2.4 million people annually. The program, financed with \$235 million from Proposition 13 and \$565 million in local agency funds, has made SAWPA a leader in watershed management for water agencies throughout the state.



Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve (Riverside County)
Photo: California Travel & Tourism Commission & Anthony Arendt



Southern California Integrated Watershed Program (Santa Ana)
Photo: Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

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ANZA-BORREGO DESERT STATE PARK

At 600,000 acres, this is the largest state park in California. Stretching across portions of Imperial, Riverside and San Diego counties, this park is home to an abundance of recreational opportunities and unique habitats for plants and wildlife. It has 500 miles of dirt roads, 12 wilderness areas and miles of hiking trails. With investments from Proposition 12 and many other sources, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park offers an unparalleled opportunity to experience the unique California Desert.

CATHTON PROPERTY

With only 5 percent of the Coachella Valley's sand dunes still intact, the 9,000-acre Cathton Property is helping preserve what's left of one of California's unique habitats. The site is a critical open space connecting Joshua Tree National Park with the Coachella Valley Preserve. Using funds from Proposition 40, state and local agencies were able to work together to purchase more than 1,300 acres of the property.



Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (Imperial, San Diego & Riverside counties)

Photo: California Travel & Tourism Commission

CONSERVING CALIFORNIA

A public education program about our essential investments in land, water and parks presented by Audubon California, California Council of Land Trusts, Ocean Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy and WiLDCOAST.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.conservingcalifornia.org

