

SR 76 Middle Project Construction Update #6

Fall 2011

Halfway to Completion

The State Route 76 (SR-76) Middle Project between Melrose Drive and South Mission Road has reached a milestone: 50% complete. By reaching this milestone, the project is on schedule for completion by the end of 2012.

The project team continues to work hard to make progress on construction while prioritizing safety and also protecting the environment.

Progress Continues

Road Work: In mid-August, traffic switched from the old roadway to a finished section between North River Road and the Argo Stone and Supply Company. This traffic switch allowed crews to work on the next stage of roadway excavation in this section. Paving will begin at the end of October between Melrose and East Vista Way with the goal of having traffic shifted onto this newly paved section around the first of the year.

San Luis Rey Bridge Work: The bridge is being constructed in three sections: west, middle and east. Crews have completed construction on the west and east sections. Crews are currently working on the middle section installing reinforcing bars and pouring concrete for the bridge deck. Once those activities are completed, the middle



Crews poured concrete for the deck of the west section of the San Luis Rey bridge structure.

section of the bridge will be prestressed, a method to reinforce the strength and tension of the bridge.

After the work is completed on all three sections of the bridge, they will be connected and expansion joints will be installed. Then, guardrails will be placed and the riding surface will be tested.

Ostrich Creek Bridge Work: Crews completed constructing the column supports and the lower portions of the bridge section. They are currently constructing the bridge deck.

Wildlife Corridors: Crews have constructed two wildlife animal crossings in this segment. These crossings facilitate wildlife movement and are part of maintaining the area's rural character.

Safety is a Priority

Move Over - It's The Law: In response to the tragic deaths of three Caltrans highway workers while on the job, this summer Caltrans launched a new statewide media campaign featuring the "Move Over" law. Motorists are required to slow down or change lanes when they see flashing lights from Caltrans, law enforcement or emergency medical services vehicles on the side of the road.

Safety for you, your passengers and our crews is our top priority. Please exercise caution as you drive through the construction area. Thank you for your patience as we continue work along the SR-76 corridor.



Flashing lights remind drivers to slow down or move over.

Ruben Ramirez: Protecting the Environment and Arroyo Toad During SR-76 Corridor Construction

Ruben Ramirez is an environmental consultant to Caltrans, through the Caltrop Corporation. Since 2009, he has worked on projects located within the San Luis Rey River flood-prone area. He provides biological monitoring and project planning assistance on issues associated with the federally endangered arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*).

What is your favorite part of being a biologist?

The most exciting part of my work is documenting information unknown about the arroyo toad. I've studied the arroyo toad for over 17 years and every year, I help provide a small piece of the puzzle to its natural history.

Why is protecting the arroyo toad important?

The arroyo toad is listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and is considered a species of special concern by the California Department of Fish and Game. Any proposed activity that may affect the arroyo toad requires a permit which allows work to proceed with a plan to monitor and protect them.

What is your role on the SR-76 project?

My responsibilities include conducting breeding season surveys and inspecting the exclusionary fencing installation. Prior to construction, I also conducted translocation surveys to relocate arroyo toads from the project site to another habitat area.

Can you describe the exclusionary fencing and how it works?

The most noticeable conservation measure is the extensive orange exclusionary fencing installed between the project site and the San Luis Rey River. The intent of this fencing is to prevent arroyo toads from entering the project site. It is made of fabric or plastic that is at least 24 inches high, staked firmly to the ground. The lower 12 inches of the fencing material stretches



The arroyo toad, an endangered species.

outward along the ground and is secured with a continuous line of sandbags. All exclusionary fencing is removed at the end of the project.

During the SR-76 construction, how is the toad being protected/monitored?

Prior to the start of any activity or construction, the fencing was installed and translocation surveys were conducted. Although the focus was to detect arroyo toads, all species that were detected in the

project area such as western toads, pacific chorus frogs, western spadefoot and western rattlesnakes, were captured and relocated outside of the project site.

Although federal permits only require that the fencing be maintained during the breeding season of the species (March to July), Caltrans has maintained the fencing throughout the non-breeding season to go above and beyond to ensure protection of natural resources in this project area.

Additionally, I educate the contractors about the potential sensitive species located within the project area. I teach them how to identify species, like the arroyo toad, and what measures to take if a species is detected during construction activities.



Ruben Ramirez erecting a fence to keep arroyo toads out of the project site.

Question of the Quarter

Is there a local resource that focuses on driver safety for new drivers?

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department's Start Smart Program is an opportunity for new drivers and their parents/guardians to clearly understand their responsibilities when a teen starts to drive. Taught by trained law enforcement personnel, it creates awareness of possible consequences, both financial and physical, of distracted or impaired driving, and provides information about collision prevention. Contact your local Vista Sheriff's station at (760) 940-4564 to sign up for a Start Smart class. Visit www.sdsheriff.net/co_startsmart.html for more information about the program, schedules, and other program locations throughout the region.