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Water—When We Know More, We Conserve More

It seems environmental news here in California these days is all drought, all the time.

The news seems dreary—but drought awareness is good news for the state’s water future says [a recent Los Angeles Times](#) article. Past California droughts have changed the ways planners and consumers alike think about how to manage water supplies and conserve.

Water planners hope the present drought will continue to positively influence the way we use water—and hope the current public focus on conservation doesn’t wash away with predicted El Nino storms in the coming months.

Miguel Luna believes sustained interest and involvement with water use and conservation is created by a sense of connection with place and the environment. Luna, just back from leading a statewide water tour for young people to show them where California’s water comes from, is the founder of [Urban Semillas](#), an organization committed to educating underserved communities about watershed and social justice issues.

He supports the creation the San Gabriel River Discovery Center project at Whittier Narrows. Youth learn some things about water and drought from peers and parents but “there needs to be a connection to place to associate with the impact on the environment.” When they turn on the tap, he says, “the water still comes out.” If abstract discussion is the only place they are exposed to water issues, they’re not going to grasp it, Luna says.

“There is a need for a center that familiarizes youth and residents in the San Gabriel Valley with water and ecology so they can make these connections within nature. The Discovery Center creates a connection with water and the environment, the confluence of place, education and environment that allows people to grasp it comprehensively, not piece by piece.”

The San Gabriel River Discovery Center is a project of the Discovery Center Authority, a partnership that includes the Central Basin Municipal Water, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy , the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District and hundreds of community supporters.

In September the EcoVoices environmental education program is returning to Whittier Narrows after bringing eco-education programming to young people in 32 Los Angeles parks throughout the summer.

Looking forward to the fall!