

Oxnard Third Graders Learn About Fish Passage from United Water Staff ***Rio del Sol Students Enjoy Tour and Classroom Presentation***

Third graders and potential future scientists from Rio del Sol Elementary School in Oxnard have spent the year studying habitat in the Santa Clara River; specifically, steelhead trout. As part of their project-based learning curriculum, 60 third-grade students visited United Water Conservation District's Freeman Diversion facility, followed by a classroom visit from United Water Conservation District's Dr. Katherine Ayers.

The students' tour of the Freeman Diversion facility included a lesson in how United Water manages Ventura County's groundwater resources and helps protect area wildlife habitat. The students took notes and asked many questions of United Water staff.

The Freeman Diversion Facility was constructed in 1991 by United Water Conservation District to divert Santa Clara River flow to enhance recharge of local groundwater basins. The facility is comprised of a concrete dam, a fish ladder, a screened fishbay, a downstream migrant trap, various canals and spreading grounds.

"The Rio del Sol students were very well-prepared and asked questions we don't usually hear from adults," remarked Chris Hendricks, one of three United Water staffers who conducted the Freeman Diversion facility tour.

One student wrote in a follow up assignment that she was glad she got to see the dam in real life; "...it was so cool and fun; thank you for letting us visit the dam," she wrote.

After the tour, the 60 students enjoyed lunch at the Freeman Diversion facility before boarding their bus back to school.

A follow up visit to the Rio del Sol school from United Water's Dr. Ayers provided the third graders with information about potential future fish ladders at the Freeman facility and aspects of groundwater management in Ventura County.

Rio del Sol third grade teacher Lianna Granado led her class through the project-based learning project, commented that she learned a lot about the District's facility and fish passage right along with her students.

