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Orange County Slated for \$37.3 Million in New Federal Funds *Santa Ana River Project to Get Bulk of Funding*

Orange County is slated for a total of \$37.3 million in new federal funding through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the next two years, on top of another \$45.9 million in funds already authorized by the President and Congress.

The bulk of the funds are targeted for the Santa Ana River Mainstem Project, a decades-long undertaking spanning 75 miles to provide flood protection to Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Congress already appropriated \$42 million for the Santa Ana River project for this federal fiscal year. The additional \$30.8 million is recommended for funding in the 2015 federal budget, subject to congressional approval. The new money, which is expected to be approved, will speed up construction of the massive project for eventual completion in the early 2020s.

The Corps also announced it will boost spending this year on operations and maintenance for the Santa Ana River, bringing the total to \$4.5 million. Another \$3.9 million has been recommended to be funded in the 2015 budget.

Additionally, two much smaller but long-needed projects in Orange County will receive funds this year, according to the Army Corps of Engineers: \$1.1 million for the Aliso Creek Feasibility Study and \$752,000 for the Westminster Watershed Feasibility Study.

The Aliso Creek study will determine how best to stabilize the creek and allow restoration of the ecosystem; the Westminster study will address flood damages along the East Garden Grove-Wintersburg channel and its aging levee system, which affects residences and businesses in 11 cities. Funding for the Aliso study is new, while additional funds for the Westminster project will allow that study to be completed by late 2015.

Lists of the projects approved for funding in the current fiscal year and those recommended for 2015 were released Tuesday by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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