

UC ANR Water Webinar



Restoring the Los Angeles River for Ecosystems and People

By: Dr. Sabrina Drill, Natural Resources Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Los Angeles County

Day/Time: Friday 02/19/2021, 3 - 4 PM

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/93722796133?pwd=a2FsKzBTUGVtOEovSTNVanRSNjZMdz09>; Meeting ID: 937 2279 6133; Passcode: 92837

Speaker Bio: Dr. Sabrina Drill is a Natural Resources Advisor for UC Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties in Southern California. She helps agencies, organizations, and communities get the scientific information they need to restore urban streams and habitats, manage invasive species, prepare for and recover from wildfires, and use urban nature to increase resilience to extreme weather and climate change. She works to connect communities to nature, especially underserved BIPOC communities, through training for community members to become environmental stewards and leaders in managing the nature around them, as well as promoting equality and justice in outdoor access. She supports citizen and community science to help better document urban nature. She serves on the Steering Committees for the National Urban Extension Leaders and the National Extension Climate Initiative. She has a Ph.D. in Geography and a M.S. in Biology, both from UCLA, a B.S. in Biology from Virginia Tech, and an A.A. in Natural Science from Simon's Rock of Bard College.

Abstract: Urban rivers support ecosystems services and biodiversity, but they also facilitate connections linking communities to nature, and to each other. Like other urban streams, the Los Angeles River has been massively modified to reduce the impact of flooding by draining stormwater and the pollutants that come along with it. For years the river has primarily served as a stormwater conveyance, while it still supported wildlife and a grab bag of artists, Angelenos without homes, and a mostly immigrant population of fisherfolk. In the past few decades, however, it has become a focal point of efforts to restore instream and riparian ecosystems, provide recreation and connection to nature, and utilize the waterway as an economic driver akin to the riverwalks in other cities. The LA River offers an extreme challenge, both as an arid flashy hydrologic system and as an ecosystem that's management is shared by numerous federal and state departments, one of the largest and most complicated county governments in the US, and over 43 cities who share the watershed – not to mention one of the most ethnically and economically diverse megalopolises in the world. I will report on our efforts to characterize instream habitat and the fish community, examine how changes in flow due to water conservation efforts and climate change might affect habitat, and discuss proposals to alter concrete channels to increase habitat value. I will also examine recent work to explore whether river re-development proposals can sustain this novel ecosystem and the human communities connected to it, while supporting biodiversity and avoiding the pitfalls of gentrification.

Host: Safeeq Khan, CE Specialist in Water and Watershed Sciences & Ellen Bruno, CE Specialist in Agriculture and Resource Economics