



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

A FISH TALE: KIDS RESTOCK MACARTHUR PARK LAKE WITH MOSQUITO-EATING FISH IN MTA SCHOOL PROJECT

With a collective flip of their tails, hundreds of mosquito-eating fish splashed into the limpid waters of MacArthur Park Lake, Tuesday. The guppy-sized fish were released by pupils from six Los Angeles elementary schools who raised them in a project sponsored by the MTA.

Restocking the lake with fish is one of the final steps toward full restoration of the south side of MacArthur Park, which was closed in April, 1991, for construction of the Metro Red Line west of the Westlake subway station. The children and their teachers were joined at the ceremony by officials from the MTA and the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks Dept.

"Restoring MacArthur Park back to better-than-new condition is a major milestone toward the completion of this segment of the Metro Red Line," said Supervisor Ed Edelman, MTA chairman. "It is important for us to involve the younger generation of Angelenos -- who will benefit most from using the subway -- in projects like this."

"These children have spent many hours feeding and caring for the fish," said Richard Alatorre, Los Angeles city councilman and MTA board member. "They've learned something about biology, ecology and transportation planning and, I hope, had lots of fun as amateur fish farmers."

(MORE)

FISH TALE

Page 2

Alatorre, who was instrumental in the creation of the fish project, noted that two other batches of bluegill and mosquito-eating fish raised during the past two years by the children were used to restock lakes in Hollenbeck Park and Echo Park. Participating in the program were pupils at Soto, Sheridan, Second Street, St. Mary's, Utah and Glassell Park elementary schools.

"You have made a valuable contribution to the environment of Los Angeles," said Franklin E. White, MTA chief executive officer, who noted that the aquariums were donated by MTA rail planners.

Between April, 1991, and February, 1994, when the park was returned to the supervision of the Department of Recreation and Parks Dept., MTA construction crews drained the lake, excavated a huge hole in the park and constructed a subway track crossover and train storage structure. The facility is an extension of the Westlake subway station and the beginning of Red Line Segment 2.

In restoring the park, Alatorre noted, the MTA rebuilt the lake with a new asphalt liner to improve maintainability, upgraded the lake's aeration system to improve the oxygen supply for aquatic life, provided new lighting, built a new walkway around the lake, provided a new lighted fountain as the lake's centerpiece and enlarged the island in the lake.

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