

**E-Ticket
Movie Mania!**

AMC Gold
Available 24/7!
Save Up to 50%

Cinemark
Save Over 60%

**Regal/Edwards/
United Artist**
Save Over 50%

Purchase Now on
The Club Webstore!
cityemployeesclub.com



Alive!



Alive! photo by Sammy Lam

DWP

Smarter Soil

DWP's capital landscaping crew is beautifying City properties with water-saving designs.

- SEE PAGE 24

ABOVE: Landscaping the DWP's Vose Street Yard in North Hollywood area, from left: Joseph Sanchez, Sr. Gardener, 7 years of City service; Chevo Serna, Gardener/Caretaker, 9 years; Charlie Kagan, Sr. Park Maintenance Supervisor, 27 years; and German Perez, Gardener/Caretaker, 23 years.



ABOVE: The Landscaping crew finishes up a water-saving installation at Distribution Station DS-91 in Tarzana. BELOW: A foliage design for DS-91.



City Employees Club of Los Angeles
120 West 2nd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Party Time
With the Baker to Vegas Teams!
PAGE 34

ALIVE! FEATURE

DWP

Smarter Soil

DWP Landscaping is replacing its thirsty lawns with beautiful designs that save water.

The DWP has long had a landscape crew to manage the foliage on its properties, but two droughts – first in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the now – have changed how the department uses water on its own sites.

In October 2012, the beginning of the current drought, one of historic proportions, a major shift took place, and the department created the Landscape Capital division, which does more than just tend to the grass and flowers – it redesigns to replace all the water-thirsty plants with smarter elements, both plants and hardscapes.

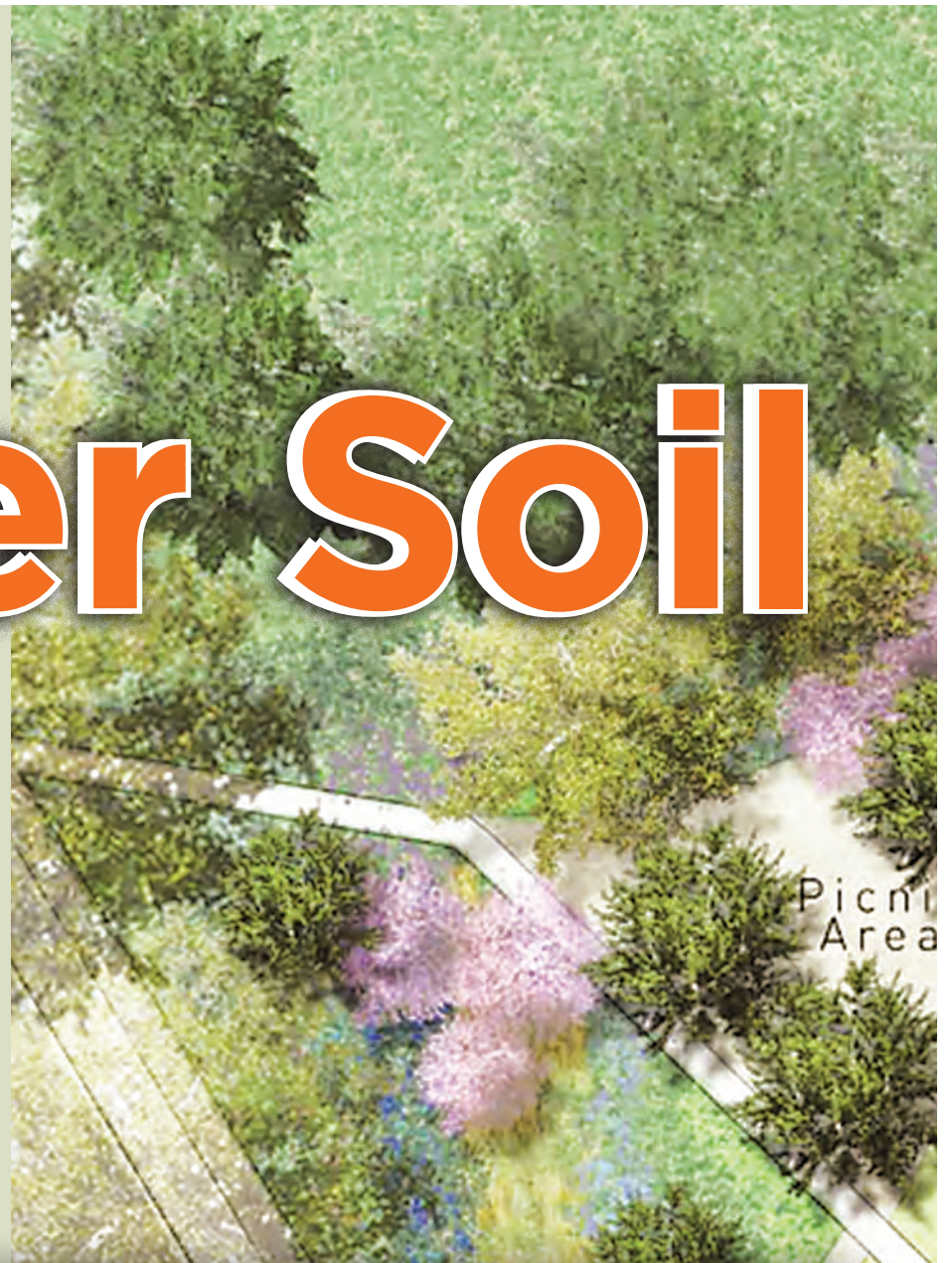
The DWP's Landscape Capital division is run by Carlos Gomez, Construction and Maintenance Superintendent for Field Operations, Support Services Division, and Charlie Kagan, Sr. Park Maintenance Supervisor.

"We saw a need to convert some of our high maintenance and water consuming facilities into more water-friendly and less maintenance-usage facilities," Carlos says. "We asked for volunteers from our Landscape Operations crew while informing crew members that they would be performing other task besides lawn and plant care. They would be using equipment such as ditch witches, compactors and the skid-steer while learning about irrigation installation.

"It is vital that our crews take into account the area where the project is located, as some plants that thrive near the coast would not be a good choice in the North San Fernando Valley."

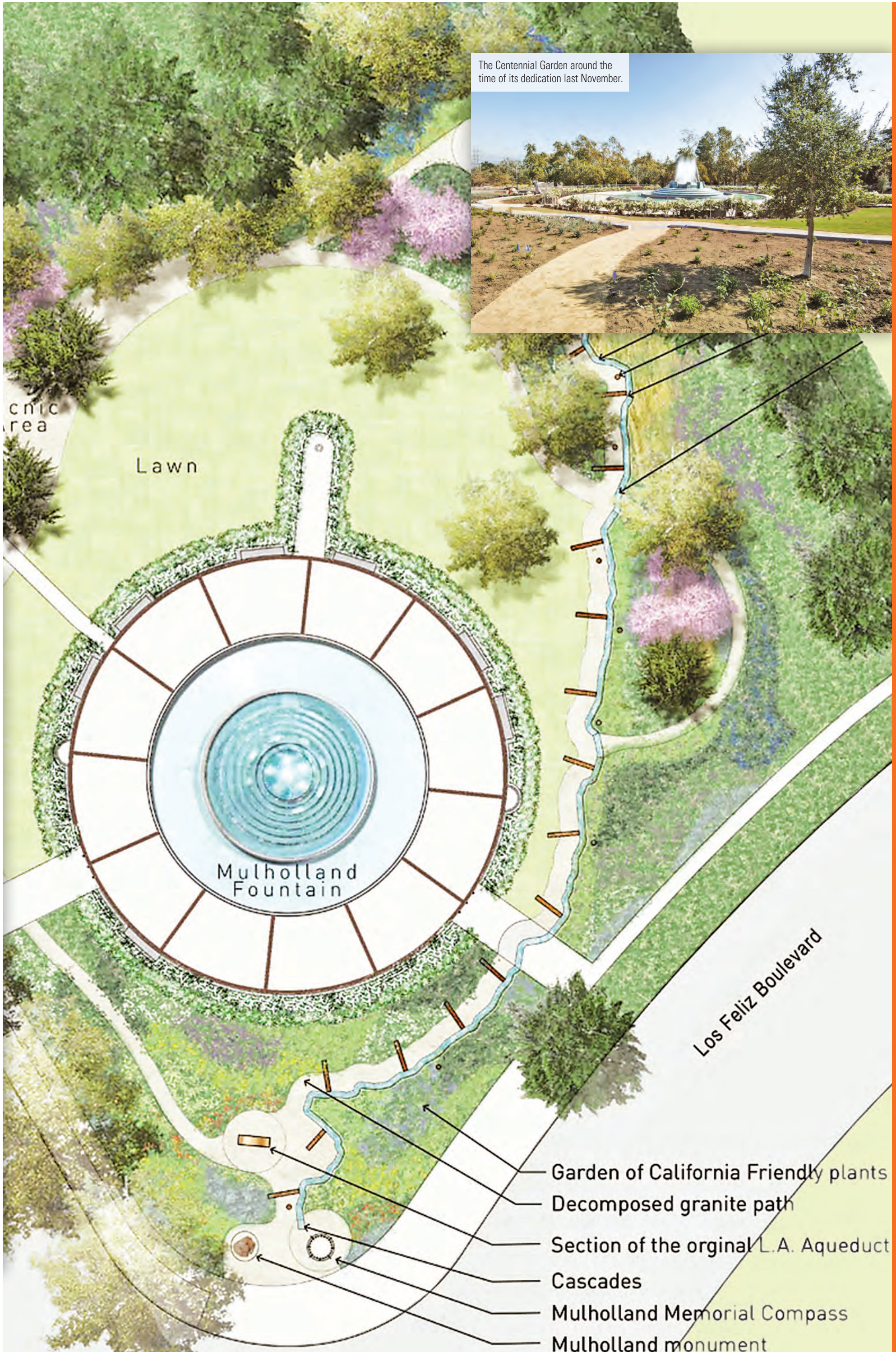
In this feature, Carlos and Charlie describe how they go about redesigning the DWP's lawns, and how the results are helping the City to save water at a critical time. ■

Feature continues, page 26



ABOVE: Landscaping the DWP's Vose Street Yard in North Hollywood are, from left: Joseph Sanchez, Sr. Gardener, 7 years of City service; Chevo Serna, Gardener/Caretaker, 9 years; Charlie Kagan, Sr. Park Maintenance Supervisor, 27 years; and German Perez, Gardener/Caretaker, 23 years.

Photos by Summy Lam, Club Director of Marketing, and courtesy the DWP and Councilman Tom LaBonge's office



To Plant, and to Educate

ALIVE! INTERVIEW

On June 11, Club Vice President of Operations Robert Larios and *Alive!* editor John Burnes sat down with DWP Landscaping's Carlos Gomez, Construction and Maintenance Superintendent, Operational Support Services Division, Field Operations, 30 years of City service; and Charles Kagan, Sr. Park Maintenance Supervisor, 27 years. The interview took place at the department's Vose Street Yard in North Hollywood.

First, tell us your paths to get to your current positions.

CHARLES KAGAN: I first started in Recreation and Parks, working in golf, and I moved up to Public Works/Street Services in the Landscape Division. Then I was promoted over here to Water and Power/vector control, and then moved up to Senior Park Maintenance Supervisor in the landscape section.

Great. Carlos?

CARLOS A. GOMEZ: I started back in 1984 as a Maintenance and Construction Helper at Castaic Power Plant. In '99 I was promoted to Building Repairer, and in 2000 to a Labor Supervisor with ISS Construction. In 2007 I became a Construction Maintenance Supervisor, and this year I became Superintendent for Facility Maintenance.

Carlos, what is the function of the DWP Landscaping Department? What does the department do?

CARLOS: We have more than 150 facilities that we have to maintain, from Boulder City, Nev., to the Eastern Sierras – our Bishop facility, Independence, Lone Pine and Big Pine. We also have outlying facilities like Castaic Power Plant, Power Plants 1 and 2, then all the areas in the San Fernando and L.A. metro region.

One of our main objectives is to give all our internal customers the facilities that best represent the Department of Water and Power. By that, I mean, let's make them showplaces, while at the same time reducing maintenance and water consumption, which we are doing at this time.

It's not just for looks. You're being very environmentally friendly.

CARLOS: That is a very true. Over the last year and a half we started a capital division here within our

landscape division. Their primary goal is to convert a lot of the facilities that are high-water-consuming and convert them to be more water-friendly. We're going in there, removing all the sod, the plants and anything that consumes lots of water. We're using decomposed granite, different types of mulch and soils, and putting in water-friendly plants.

CHARLES: Carlos has said it right. We're using different-colored rocks, materials and various drought-resistant plants to be maintenance-, environmentally-, and water-friendly.

The Design Process

You're not just installing these, but you're designing them, too, right? Talk about the design process.

CHARLES: Sure. We are going from water-consuming facilities that have lots of turf, to California-friendly native plants. We use different concepts such as Mediterranean, arid, or a combination of both, depending on where the locations are. There's no cookie-cutter design. Each station has its own natural look, depending upon the layout. We basically look at the facility, start designing it, and retrofit the irrigation system to low water usage. We do designs that fit the community. This is evident as we have received positive feedback from the ratepayers we serve.

Our designs basically come together as a group effort. We take everyone's input. We'll come up with a rough design concept, brainstorm it with everybody, lay it out, and make sure the community and management are happy, so everyone's on board.

Once everyone is on board, the project goes full steam ahead, as we like to get in and out of the neighborhood as to cause the least amount of inconvenience to the neighbors.

Tell us a little bit more about the community. What is their reaction to a project once it's finished?

CHARLES: Our most recent project was Distribution Station DS-91 up in Tarzana/ Encino. It had 9,000 square feet of sod, plants and other materials that required removal.

The department met with the community and provided concepts that we designed. After receiving community feedback, we modified our design and moved forward. We've gone from a facility that consumed lots of water, to a facility that uses minimal water. It uses decomposed granite, volcanic rock, California crushed gold rock, and includes succulents, and drought-tolerant California-friendly plants.

CARLOS: It's not something we throw together overnight. Projects such as DS-91 had a lot of lush green area. We did not want to put a lot of decomposed granite and walk away, as this would not look good – the neighborhood has a tropical look. DWP held meetings with the community. We illustrated our proposed drawings, keeping in mind the budget allocated for this project. We always want to give DWP and our valued ratepayers the biggest bang for their buck. We discussed the project with our in-house architect, Agvani Sargsyan, as she assists with our landscape designs. Once the design was agreed upon by all, including the community, we moved forward to complete this project in a timely manner. Our goal was met as the facility now saves thousands of gallons of water and requires less maintenance.

Precious Resources

Saving water and maintenance costs is what it's all about.

CARLOS: Like everybody else in the City, we've been hit with budget cutbacks. If we can take a facility like DS-91 that requires 10 hours a week for maintenance, and cut it down to where it uses two or three hours, that's a big plus for Water and Power.

Is there any sort of number that tells how much water is being saved at these locations?

CHARLES: Yes, there's data. The type of sprinkler head tells you how many gallons per minute it puts out. We do the math – gallons per minute, gallons per day, gallons per month. When we retrofit the system with the new heads, it's the same process again. The newer heads use a lot less water. I would say it's roughly a 70 percent savings of water.

CARLOS: We're in a historic drought right now. If we go back in time, we all remember Southern California as having ample water; everybody wanted everything lush and green. As time has moved forward, we understand here at the DWP that we need to be the trailblazers in showing the public that we should be getting rid of all these lush green lawns and replace them with items including crushed rock, water-friendly native plants, and low water-consuming irrigation systems.

The big thing I see is that we are the example; we are the ones who say, look at what you can do. We're presenting to the public all the ideas. We are putting plant names on placards at each station so the general public can identify the plants that work in that neighborhood.

Models for the Public

You touched a little bit about what people are doing with their lawns and their gardens now. What's your advice to them? What should they be growing or designing?

CHARLES: They can look at the Department facilities.



At a Landscaping project at the Sylmar Receiving Station are, from left: John Burnes, *Alive!* editor; Carlos Gomez, Construction and Maintenance Superintendent; Charles Kagan, Park Maintenance Supervisor; and Robert Larios, the Club's Vice President of Operations.

— CONTINUED PAGE 28

The Support Staff



The DWP Landscaping Capital Group cannot function without its downtown support staff. They are (from left) Rhonda Morgan, Management Analyst; Billy Washington, Clerk Typist; Beryl Taylor, Management Analyst; Gail McFarlane, Utility Administrator; Brenda Nesby, Sr. Clerk Typist; Linda Duong, Utility Administrator; Sharon Lovely, Principal Clerk Utility; Debbie Nakamoto, Sr. Clerk Typist; John Gardner, Clerk Typist; Zhi Qiu, Student Worker; Betty Johnson, Clerk Typist; and Faye Strong, Manager of Business Support Services. NOT PICTURED: Rachawn Baker, Utility Administrator; Julie Walters, Management Analyst; Elizabeth Mar, Principal Clerk Utility; Janie Rios, Clerk Typist; and Yim Lui, Clerk Typist.

Sylmar Reservoir Facility



Digging an irrigation trench at the Sylmar Reservoir facility are (from left) Juan Raygoza, Gardener/Caretaker, 10 years of City service; Reyes Nuñez, Gardener/Caretaker, 6 years; Rodrigo Mendez, Capital Projects, 8 years; David Garibay, Gardener/Caretaker, 29 years; and Joseph Sanchez, Sr. Gardener, 7 years.

Projects

Below are some photos of the DWP Landscaping process, saving in some cases up to 70 percent in water consumption.

ALIVE! FEATURE Smarter Soil

Distribution Station **23** Pomona



Distribution Station **28** West Los Angeles



Distribution Station **91** Tarzana



Distribution Station **85** Tujunga



Stonework
Here's a before-and-during sequence of the landscaping crew placing water-saving stonework.

EXISTING HEDG
CONCRETE DRIVEWAY
Revised Plan 4/25/2014
Asami Sarquisan

RAISED PLANTS
VOLT
CEMENT RUN OFF

ALIVE! INTERVIEW

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

CARLOS: We strongly recommend that they get rid of their lush green lawns and go to more drought-tolerant landscaping. The DWP is offering rebates; you have to be pre-approved from the department first. [See related story.]

CHARLES: The public can still make their house look tropical. There are different ways of doing it. They don't have to go with all California natives or California-friendlies, but they can mix and match their plants with a nice design and conserve water. That's the main point – they can remove a lawn and conserve water and still have a nice-looking house.

CARLOS: That's the same message we're trying to convey when we revamp the distribution stations. It looks gorgeous out there. In some places, they can save up to 70 percent of their water bill, if not more.

I know Charlie and I agree on this – we both strongly encourage people to take advantage of the Department's rebate program as California faces a record drought.

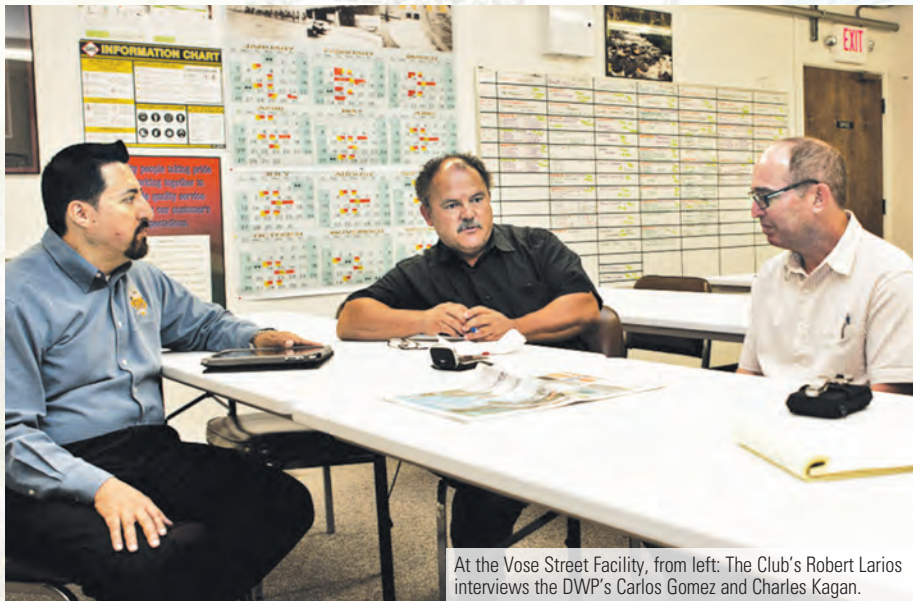
An Education Mission

Has anybody been doing it? Have you noticed any shifting in the community, even small beginnings, anything like that?

CARLOS: In some of the areas where we've revamped these distribution stations, we have driven around and noticed changing landscapes. DS-91 was a perfect example – a lot of the public was coming up to our crews and asking us, "Hey, what kind of plants are these? Can you give us the name of that gravel?" They're helping themselves because they're going to see a major savings in their water bill.

You have more than just a landscaping function. You have an educational mission, too.

CARLOS: That would be very accurate.



At the Vose Street Facility, from left: The Club's Robert Larios interviews the DWP's Carlos Gomez and Charles Kagan.

CHARLES: It's very accurate, because we've had people come up to us and want us to help them. We have given them advice on the type of plants, irrigation systems and aggregates they can use. We've noticed some community members changing their landscapes.

CARLOS: Not only are we giving ideas, but Water and Power also offers free classes to the customers to attend to learn about the projects and get ideas on what they can do. That information is on the Website.

What do you wish people knew about what you and your crew do?

CHARLES: The crews work really hard and take tremendous pride in the work they perform daily. They are smart and give their heart and soul to the job they perform.

CARLOS: I'll tell you what: I would put any one of the crews I oversee against anybody in private industry. That's how proud and sure I am that they would hold their own, because they are a very hardworking staff here at the DWP.

What comments do you get from the good work that you're doing?

CHARLES: At each of the stations we have converted, the community has praised the

work that the DWP has performed.

CARLOS: At DS-28, with all the dog lovers in that area– they just praised the heck out of the department, as we made it "doggie friendly".

CHARLES: It's all been positive. The crews take tremendous pride in the work they perform.

CARLOS: We're both adamant that if people come up and ask our crews questions, we want our crews to take the time and answer the questions for the public, because it's in our best interest. We want them to know what plants we recommend. In the long run it's going to help the department save money, and it also gives us a positive image in the community. These guys are the frontline people. These guys are the first thing that the public sees. The customer drives by, sees a facility and says, "Wow, that looks beautiful." If it doesn't look beautiful, we get the worst effect; that is, "What the heck are these people doing out there?" That's what we don't want. We want everybody to think extremely positively of the DWP.

CHARLES: We get good feedback, and people comment on the design and nature of the project. It's really interesting how they pick up on the small details that we take for granted

because we've done it so often. "Hey, you left the regular shrubs there. You didn't rip out everything." And we explain to them that, "You could do that at your house, too. You don't have to demo your whole yard. You just do areas of it to make it drought tolerant or California friendly," because there are shrubs and trees that you don't have to touch; you just work around the main structures and the framework of the station or the facility to make it look good and blend in with the community.

What about your support staff?

CARLOS: People don't get to see one group that makes us all function and that doesn't get the recognition they deserve, and that's our support staff – our clerical staff, our people behind the scenes. Yes, our crews are out there doing the landscape operations, and the general public sees them. But if it weren't for our support staff securing the contracts for plants and materials, our capital projects wouldn't be finished in a timely manner.

CHARLES: They make things click really quickly. It's teamwork.

CARLOS: That's exactly what I was going to say!

CHARLES: They're an integral part of our work.

CARLOS: Without them we fail. It's as simple as that.

Our first project, DS-86, probably took us four to five months to complete because the support wasn't in place. Now we go to a place like DS-91, where our support staff has put the contracts in place – we just pick up the phone; the contracts are all in place; the materials, the plants, and everything else arrives; and our crews can focus just on their job of changing out the old and putting in the new. I think our support staff is too often forgotten.

We'll include them, for sure.

CARLOS: Great. And on a side note, I think the newspaper you guys put together is awesome. I personally enjoy reading the articles.

Thanks. And thanks for the tour and interview today, too.

CARLOS: Thank you.



Get Paid to Redo Your Lawn

DWP offers incentive program. You must apply online first.

You could be paid to convert your grassy lawn to a drought-resistant mix. And the amount has just been raised.

DWP launched its **Landscape Incentive Program** in 2009, which involves replacing turf grass with California-friendly plants, mulch and permeable pathways. Since turf grass is very expensive to maintain, requiring heavy water use and lots of attention, the California-friendly Landscape Incentive Program can save you money and, more importantly, save water for both residential and commercial customers.

Application pre-approval is required before starting any landscape project.

Since May, the single family residential program now pays \$3 per square foot of healthy, green grass removed and converted to drought-tolerant landscaping.

For more information and to apply online, go to: www.ladwp.com/CF



Pictured here are some of the California-friendly and -native plants Landscaping uses in its designs.

SHOWN HERE:

1. Aloe bainesii
2. Cotinus coggygia 'Royal Purple'
3. Erigeron speciosus
4. Stachys byzantina 'Lamb's Ear'



Brush Clearing Crew

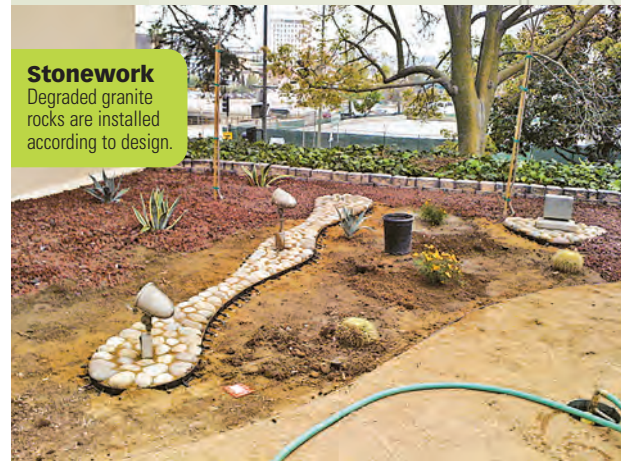
Clearing brush as part of the DWP's regular fire prevention efforts are members of the Landscaping Maintenance crew (from left) David Vara, Park Maintenance Supervisor, 17 years of City service; Jose Hernandez, Gardener/Caretaker, 32 years; Esiquio Landa, Gardener/Caretaker, 7 years; David Ruiz, Gardener/Caretaker, 11 years; Alex Garganta, Gardener/Caretaker, 10 years; and Emilio Valenzuela, Gardener/Caretaker, 12 years.



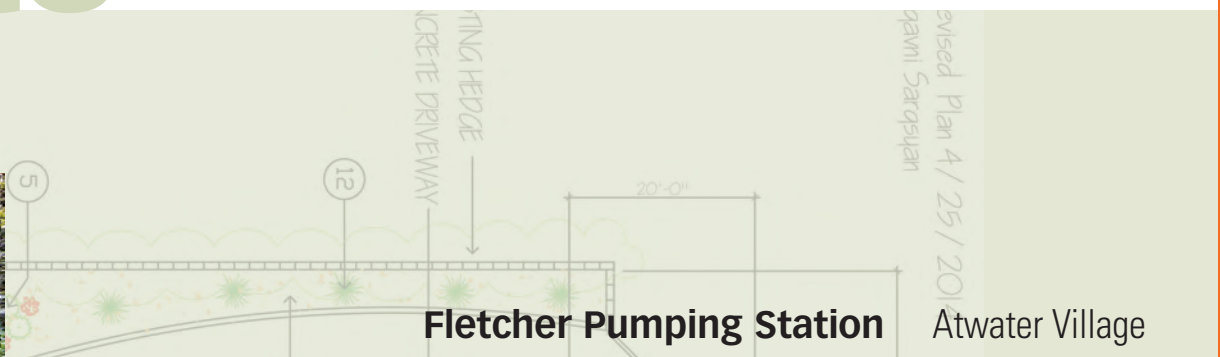
Projects

ALIVE! FEATURE Smarter Soil

Distribution Station **7** Downtown



Stonework
Degraded granite rocks are installed according to design.



Fletcher Pumping Station Atwater Village



Installed
The work is finished and ready to go. All that's left is growth.



BEFORE
Digging a new pipe trench.



AFTER
The new system, installed.

Irrigation
Water-saving irrigation systems are critical to the new designs.

LANDSCAPING'S SHOWPIECE: The Centennial Garden

Of all the projects that DWP's Landscaping capital crew has undertaken since its inception in October 2012, probably the most prominent is the Aqueduct Centennial Garden and Mulholland Memorial Fountain in Los Feliz.

The team, plus additional resources inside and outside the DWP, officially opened the new garden last November.

Aqueduct Centennial Garden features:

- Maintenance of the pine trees, cedar trees and rose bushes
- Drought-tolerant landscaping, including California native grasses, Blue Flame agave surrounding the existing rose bushes, sycamore, Manzanita, oak trees and bushes with a variety of colors, and drip irrigation with automatic controllers
- Decomposed granite paths that mimic the Los Angeles Aqueduct alignment, starting from Mono Lake to the City of Los Angeles
- Additional interconnected granite paths, and benches
- Sitting areas
- Unobtrusive interpretive signs
- A section of the original aqueduct pipe

The fountain was named for William Mulholland, the DWP engineer who designed and engineered the LA Aqueduct, which brought water to Los Angeles and fueled the City's growth. November 2, 2003 marked the 100-year anniversary of the completion of the aqueduct.

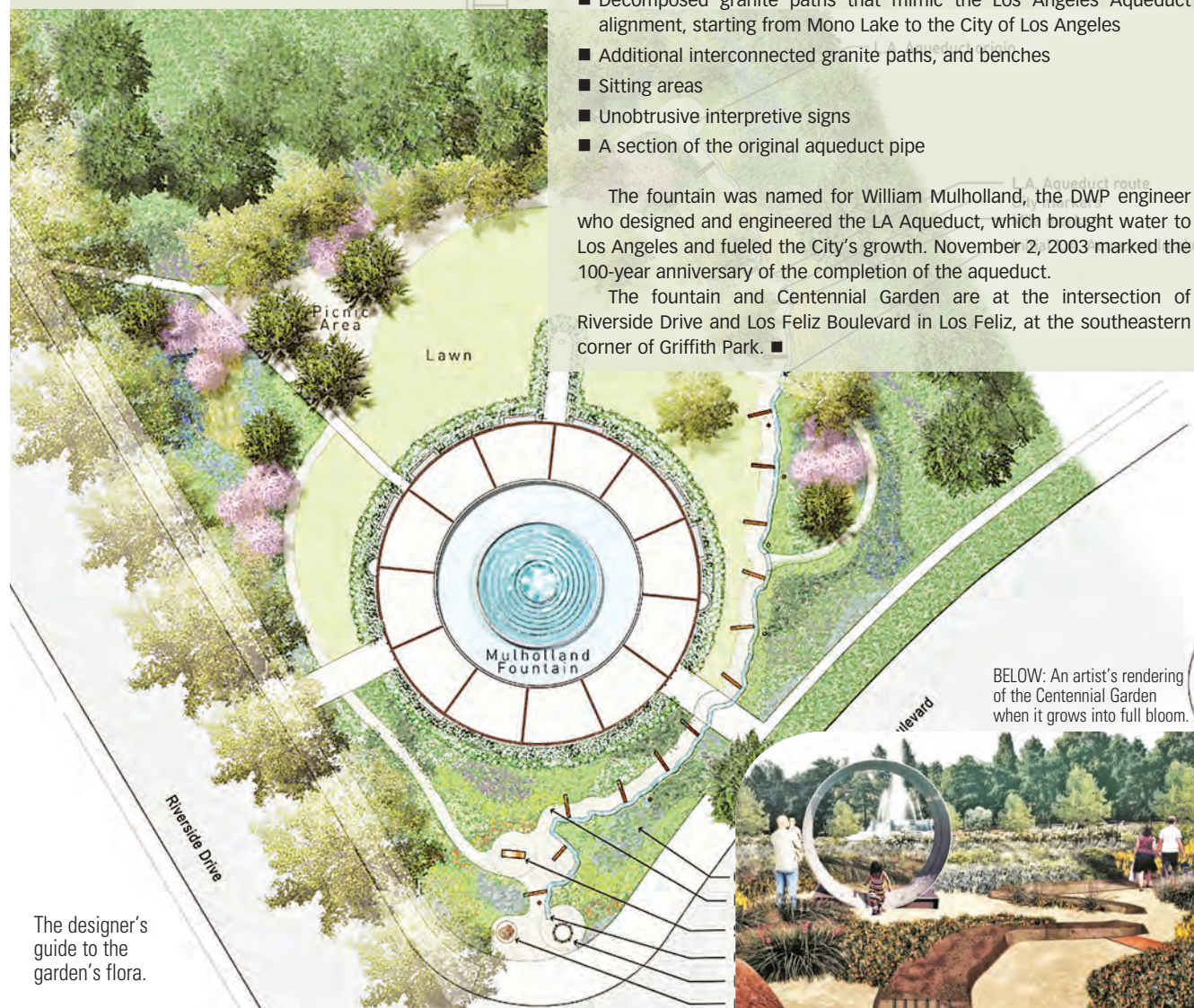
The fountain and Centennial Garden are at the intersection of Riverside Drive and Los Feliz Boulevard in Los Feliz, at the southeastern corner of Griffith Park. ■



The Centennial Garden around the time of its dedication last November.



Mr. LA, Councilman Tom LaBonge, Club Member (center), cuts the ribbon as the Centennial Garden is dedicated last November.



The designer's guide to the garden's flora.

BELOW: An artist's rendering of the Centennial Garden when it grows into full bloom.



Decomposed granite has been dyed blue to mimic the alignment of the LA Aqueduct.