



# SADDLE CREEK SOUTH PRESERVE

## M2: ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

OCTA's Measure M2 Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) provides comprehensive mitigation to offset the environmental impacts of the 13 Measure M2-funded freeway projects.

The EMP presents a comprehensive mitigation approach that provides not only replacement habitat, but also the opportunity to improve the overall functions and value of sensitive biological resources throughout Orange County.

Based on the evaluation of mitigation opportunities in the County, priority conservation areas were identified, including candidate parcels and properties that could be considered for wilderness preservation purposes. Properties were then selected for acquisition and restoration. These properties are protected to enhance wildlife connectivity, safeguard sensitive species and preserve substantial parcels of valuable habitat.



*Cactus Wren*

## ABOUT THE PRESERVE

The Saddle Creek South Preserve is an 82-acre parcel located on the south side of Live Oak Canyon Road in the eastern portion of unincorporated Orange County, north of Rancho Santa Margarita. It's situated at the western base of the Santa Ana Mountains and features a series of low, east-west trending hills.

The parcel lies within the Northern Foothills core habitat area, which supports primarily low-elevation vegetation and includes relatively large blocks of intact habitat with high biodiversity.

The Preserve has a variety of habitats including:

- Grassland
- Oak Woodland
- Coastal Sage Scrub
- Chaparral

Saddle Creek South provides habitat for several important species such as:

- Coastal California Gnatcatcher
- Cactus Wren
- Intermediate Mariposa Lily
- Many-Stemmed Dudleya
- Coast Horned Lizard
- Orange-Throated Whiptail
- Mountain Lion
- Bobcat

Saddle Creek South also lies between the Santa Ana Mountains and Live Oak Canyon/O'Neill Canyon, and its preservation protects wildlife movement between these two areas. The acquisition of Saddle Creek South is the EMP's first step in joining together adjacent open space areas in the foothills, while at the same time limiting urban encroachment. This Preserve also provides opportunities for the restoration and enhancement of native vegetation and habitat for sensitive species, in line with the major objectives of the EMP.

