

# Flood control averted disaster

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THE flood control channels, debris basins and urban rivers such as the San Gabriel and Los Angeles don't look like much during the dusty days of summer.

But come the rainy season, they shine like a gem.

Case in point: Last week's six days of precipitation that dumped as much as seven inches of rain on Mount Wilson and the local foothills did not cause any substantial damage to property or streets from mud flows, debris movement or flooding.

A great part of that success was due to a functioning flood control system and the men and women who maintain it at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. They deserve heaps of praise for the way the system worked, channeling storm runoff to the established storm drains and rivers and curbing mudflows away from hillside homes located just south of last summer's Station Fire burn areas.

"From our perspective, the entire flood control system is working. It's doing exactly what it's designed to do," said Public Works spokesman Bob Spencer.

That certainly appears to be the case. And many others acknowledged that truth by adding their praise, including Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and local Rep. David Dreier, R-San Dimas, who both toured La Crescenta and La Cañada Flintridge on Friday.

Still, we were pleased to report that over the sunny weekend, the county crews were not complacent. They moved tractor and dump truck up the hills to clear out mud from debris basins. Again, that's where the mud and debris flows are supposed to go.

For the most part, the system worked, except for a minor mudslide resulting in damage along Rock Castle Drive and on Ocean View Boulevard in La Cañada Flintridge. Even then, workers quickly cleared a blockage at a street and redirected the flows by K-rails and sandbags to a nearby canyon.

Likewise, the freeway

flooding we would expect in such a steady dousing did not occur, with some minor

exceptions along the 10 Freeway in Baldwin Park and the juncture of the 605 and 210 in Irwindale. Notably absent were the usual pools along Arrow Highway and Live Oak Avenues in Irwindale and south Monrovia. A major flood control repair project that took almost two years to finish contributed to a well-drained roadway.

Cities that aren't near the Station Fire but braced for the worst anyway, such as West Covina and Glendora, reported the day after the weeklong storm system that flooding did not materialize on local streets. The Walnut sheriff's station also reported no rain-related problems.

With a storm ready to hit tonight, and another slated for the weekend, these first-responders cannot be complacent. And that means motorists, too, must take the usual precautions.

While the possibility of mud flows entering homes in the foothills is still there, the performance last week by the county can lend confidence that all possible precautions are being taken and that mudslide disasters can be averted.