



Follow the Flow

How water moves through LA



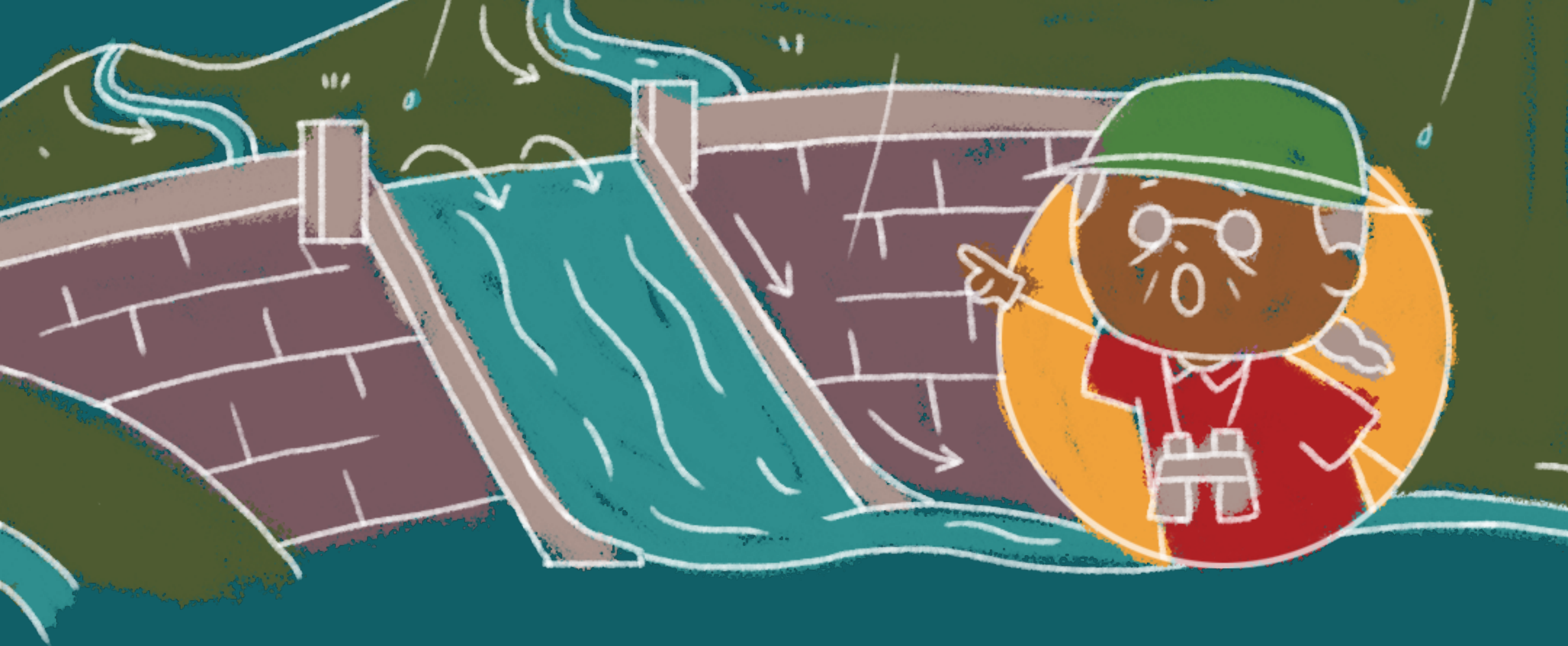


1. Local Mountain Watershed

We all live in a watershed—the land that channels water from higher to lower areas. Here in Los Angeles, rainwater and snowmelt make their way toward the Pacific Ocean.

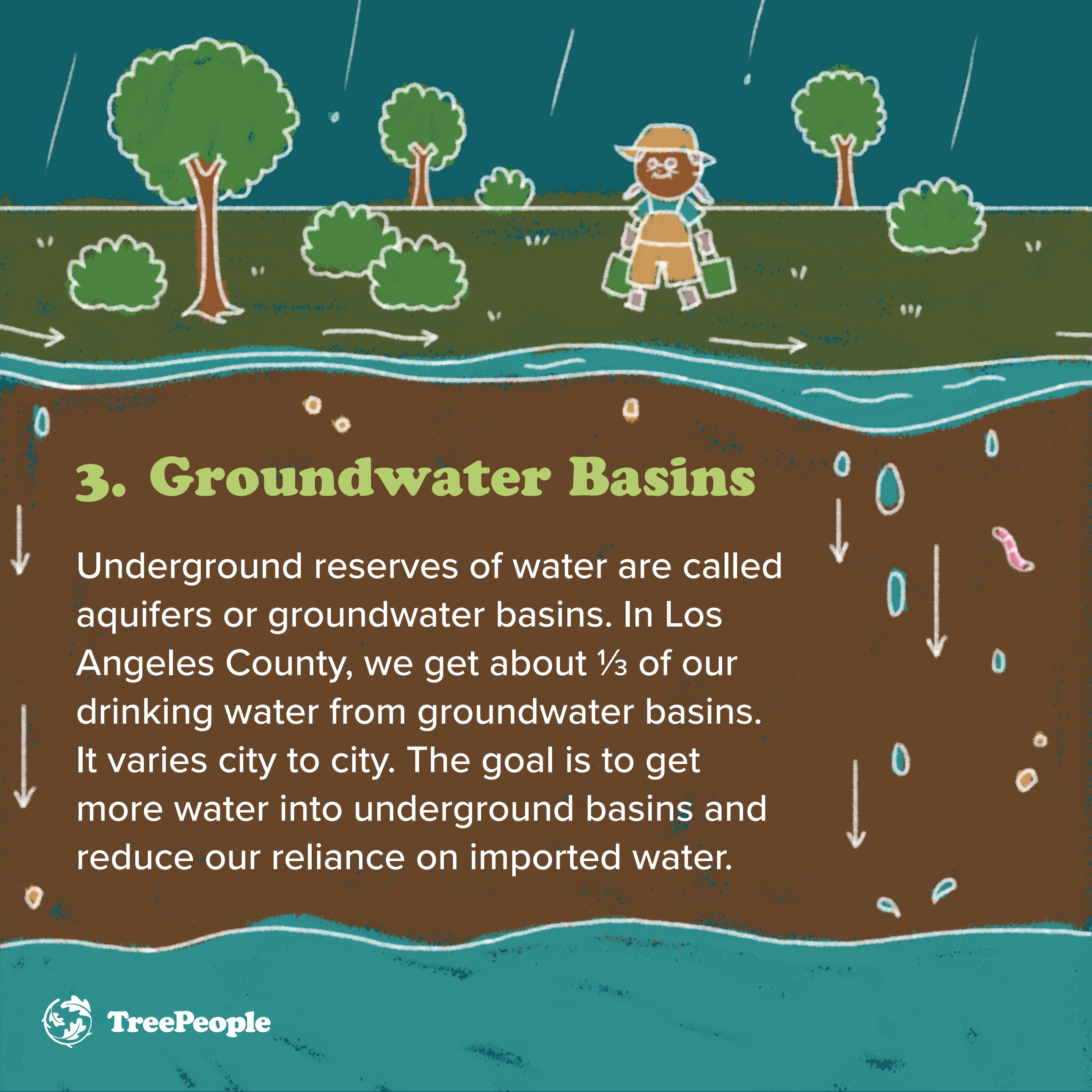


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2. Debris Basins and Dams

As an element of the County flood control system, debris basins capture sediment, gravel, boulders and vegetative debris that are washed out of the mountain canyons during storms. Dams retain water in a reservoir that can be released downstream back into the river or diverted to spreading grounds. Spreading grounds allow water to percolate into the ground and recharge aquifers—underground water basins.



3. Groundwater Basins

Underground reserves of water are called aquifers or groundwater basins. In Los Angeles County, we get about $\frac{1}{3}$ of our drinking water from groundwater basins. It varies city to city. The goal is to get more water into underground basins and reduce our reliance on imported water.



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4. Urban Environment

Paved areas prevent water from seeping into the ground. Water flowing over these surfaces (deemed “urban runoff”) picks up trash and other pollutants and eventually ends up in rivers and the ocean. Paved surfaces also contribute to local flooding issues. The goal is to create “green” infrastructure that slows, captures and cleans rainwater.



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5. Homes

Our homes are small watersheds that direct rainwater into the street, creating runoff. Fertilizers and motor oil pollute this water. Dry weather runoff—water from sprinklers and hoses—is more toxic given lower water volume flow. The goal is to divert water into rain tanks or landscaping before it reaches the street.



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6. Streets

Streets drain water from gutters to catch basins, and underground storm drains into a vast channelized system that sends water to the ocean (uncleaned). The goal is to capture and treat water upstream to reduce pollutants that get carried to the ocean.



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7. Ocean

When it rains one inch in the County of Los Angeles, billions of gallons of polluted water are sent to the ocean.



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Good to Know

There are 6 major watersheds in Los Angeles County which are primarily served by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District.

The Flood Control District manages 14 dams and reservoirs, 162 debris basins and 26 spreading grounds.

The storm drain systems are maintained by Flood Control District, Cities, Caltrans and other agencies.

More Info

To learn more, visit treepeople.org/water



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