The people indigenous to what is now Costa Mesa were part of the Native Americans who crossed over the western mountain ranges from the “Great Basin” of Nevada, Utah and Western Oregon. Originally these Native Americans were hunter-gatherers and depended solely on their surroundings. As such, they considered themselves stewards of the environment, “Keepers of Mother Earth.” Instead of cultivating crops or raising livestock, these Native Americans used what was readily available in nature for food, clothing, and shelter. They used grass similar to some still found in Fairview Park to weave elaborate baskets and construct shelter (wikiups). They also used local plants, stones, and animals for food supply, medicine, tools, and clothing. For items that were not available locally, they traded with other tribes, traveling on land by foot or on water by canoe.

Today, Fairview Park is a crown jewel that is rich in history. This nature site encompasses 208 acres of open space consisting of bluffs, vernal pools, trails, native plant communities and wildlife. The wetland and riparian habitat improvements to Fairview Park are part of the 1998 approved Fairview Park Master Plan. City staff and the Fairview Park Citizens Advisory Committee developed the master plan for the restoration of the park. The committee emphasized the preservation of the native plant community/habitat.

In September 2009, Phase I of the Fairview Park Wetlands and Riparian Habitat Project was completed. Seventeen acres of riparian habitat were planted, wetland ponds and streams graded, and an irrigation system installed.

Phase II improvements included the completion of the constructed wetland ponds and water delivery system, a multipurpose trail, fencing, signage, and twenty three acres of native habitat plantings and an irrigation system.

The creation of wetlands and riparian habitat in Fairview Park provides many benefits:

- The construction of a water delivery system from the Greenville-Banning Channel will take untreated dry weather urban runoff and flows from storm events, divert them to the wetlands and treat the water on site naturally thus preventing pollutants from reaching the ocean or having to be treated by the sanitation district;
- Restores historical riparian habitat;

- Creates a wildlife recreational area in an urban setting for the citizens of Orange County;
- Educates the public on the benefits of wetlands and their contribution to the ecology of the coastal area.