



Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project

Advancing ecosystem health. Connecting communities with nature.

August 2012

www.ballonarestoration.org



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Public Process for Restoration Begins!

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This project will involve restoring, enhancing, and creating native coastal wetland and upland habitats in the approximately 600-acre Ecological



Artistic Rendering - Alternative 5 (PWA 2008)

Reserve. The reserve comprises previously filled and dredged coastal wetland and upland habitat that would be restored by increasing tidal flow throughout the project area, removing invasive species, and planting native vegetation.

WHAT'S NEW ON THE WETLANDS...

Jr. Rangers at Ballona!

The Mountains, Recreation and Conservation Authority just completed their first ever Wetland Unit for their Junior Rangers program! The MRCA's Junior Ranger Program is a 10 lesson program, which introduces youth to natural and cultural resources, basic outdoor skills, community service, team building, and leadership skills. The Wetland Unit program had many partners: the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Friends of Ballona Wetlands, the Audubon Society, and us! Ecologists with the BWER monitoring program taught these Junior Rangers valuable science skills, including how to use a GPS and how to assess water quality parameters. The excited Junior Rangers were sworn



in by an MRCA Ranger at a graduation ceremony at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve on Friday, August 10th.

Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority



Want to join our Mailing List?

Email Charlie Piechowski at

cpiechowski@santamonibay.org

Trying new things: good for you and good for monitoring!

The BWER monitoring team has been trying new things this past quarter. After heading up to Elkhorn Slough to complete a certification course for the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) in northern California, they began to incorporate this method of assessing estuarine wetland health into their monitoring program. CRAM is a Level-2 (rapid assessment) monitoring method in the EPA's three-tiered system. CRAM scores are based on averaging multiple metrics within an Assessment Area, including: surrounding buffer and landscape attributes, hydrology of the system, physical structure, and biotic structure.

These CRAM rapid assessment data will be compared with both the site-intensive Level-3 baseline data that the monitoring team has been collecting at the BWER over the last three years and regional data that will be collected later on this summer and into the fall at wetlands throughout southern California. The CRAM data will help assess the functionality of some of the wetland habitats, and provide information to the restoration team.



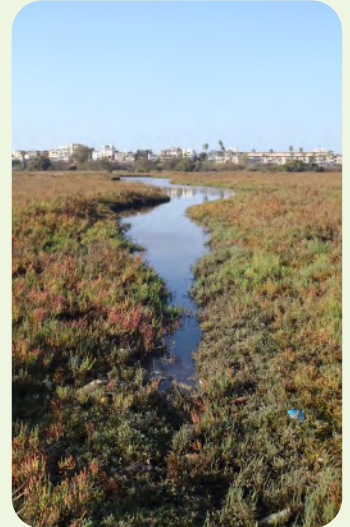
For more information regarding CRAM:

<http://www.cramwetlands.org/>

To see CRAM results:

<http://www.cramwetlands.org/viewresults.html>

For questions regarding CRAM:



WHAT'S NEW IN THE WATERSHED...

Milton Street, in an urban area of the Santa Monica Bay Watershed is about to become a little greener, while improving water quality at the same time! Stormwater runoff from the project site (pictured at right) and surrounding neighborhood currently drains directly into the Ballona Creek untreated. To improve water quality, new parkways with vegetated swales will be installed on both sides of the street, with only native shrubs and trees. They will capture, treat, and infiltrate wet and dry weather runoff from the street and from the park. They will remove trash, metals, bacteria, organics, oil, and grease from the stormwater before it flows into Ballona Creek. This will reduce pollution loads to Ballona Creek and improve the habitat potential and water quality in Ballona Creek and Santa Monica Bay.

The SMBRC Governing Board voted at its June meeting to recommend contributing SMBRC funding to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for this project. The project is a partnership including the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority, the Baldwin Hills Conservancy, and the State Coastal Conservancy. Funding will come from Proposition 84 and construction is planned for 2013.

For more information, contact Jack Topel at jtopel@waterboards.ca.gov.

Creekside dreams do come true...

...transform a vacant parcel between Milton Street and the Ballona Creek flood control levee into a natural park with native plants, public amenities, educational values, and water quality benefits!



Existing Site Photo: View Looking West



Existing Site Photo: View Looking East

The 'Baseline Assessment Program: 2010-2011 Report' is complete!

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission is pleased to announce the completion of the second year baseline report with comprehensive data from throughout the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (BWER); this report is supplemental to the first year baseline report. It is divided into twelve chapters, one for each of the 11 monitoring components (i.e. water quality, marine sediments, terrestrial soils, vegetation, ichthyofauna, herpetofauna, mammals, avifauna, benthic invertebrates, terrestrial invertebrates, and physical characteristics), and one for the introduction. Each chapter includes summaries of methods used in the Baseline Assessment Program surveys, results and data collected during the second year, and preliminary comparisons and analyses across both baseline years when possible.

In 2009, the SMBRC partnered with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) to assess the ecological condition of the BWER through comprehensive surveys. The resulting data will serve to inform the state's wetland restoration planning, as well as to help develop long-term and regional monitoring programs. In September 2011, the SMBRC completed the second year of surveys at the BWER. The third year of monitoring is currently underway.



The Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve Baseline Assessment Program 2010-2011 Final Report

Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, Los Angeles, California
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

Prepared for: California State Coastal Conservancy
California Department of Fish and Game
June 2012

Primary author and editor:
Karina Johnston
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission



HERPETOFAUNA
Baseline Assessment Program: 2010-2011 Report

CHAPTER 6: HERPETOFAUNA

Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, Los Angeles, California
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

Prepared for: California State Coastal Conservancy
June 2012

Author: Karina Johnston

This report is available for free electronic download. You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the downloaded files. Click here to get the free Adobe Acrobat Reader or copy and paste this link to your browser: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

Click here to download the first year report (2009 – 2010) and second year report (2010 – 2011) or copy and paste this link to your browser:

<http://santamonicabay.org/BWRP/BaselineReports.html>

Interested in reading more about the Ballona wetlands?

Find project documents and new research and publications at: www.ballonarestoration.org

They can be found under the Project Documents link of our new website.



Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project Environmental Review Process



US Army Corps
of Engineers.

Public Process For Restoration Begins!

Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Notice of Intent (NOI) filed:

The long-awaited restoration of the Ballona Wetlands officially kicks off this month with the release of notices by state and federal agencies overseeing the project. The California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) will prepare environmental reviews of potential designs for the wetlands and document their likely impacts on wildlife, water pollution, local traffic and other factors at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve.

NOP

The State Clearinghouse has received the NOP for the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project and has assigned the SCH number: 2012071090

NOI

For the federal NOI notice go to the following link:
<https://federalregister.gov/a/2012-18166>

We want to hear from you!

Public Comments and the Public Scoping Meeting:

In Person:

People are encouraged to give their suggestions for the environmental review at a scoping meeting on:

**August 16, 2012
at the Fiji Gateway
4 - 7 pm.**

Snail mail*:

Ballona Wetlands
Restoration Project
C/O Donna McCormick
1 Ada, Suite 100
Irvine, CA 92816

Comments may be submitted until **October 23, 2012.**



Email:

Donna.McCormick@icfi.com

***Comment card is at the end of the newsletter.**

For documents, reports, and FAQs about the project, go to :
www.ballonarestoration.org

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES...



CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Conservation Symposium: NCCPs and Plant Conservation

Saturday, September 8, 2012

UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, Santa Cruz, CA

CNPS will present its annual Conservation Symposium, speakers will present a retrospective, including case studies, of how plant species and plant communities have been addressed in Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs) over the past 20 years.



Cal-IPC

Cal-IPC's 21st Annual Symposium - Rohnert Park "Bay to Basin: Coordinating Response to Invasive Plants Across California"

**Thursday - Saturday,
October 11-13, 2012**

Join Cal-IPC and 300 attendees at the Wine Country DoubleTree for Cal-IPC's 21st Annual Symposium. The symposium promises a great line-up of talks, posters, and activities.

Pick up organic veggies and learn about our programs: now in one Convenient package!!

We will be at the Playa Vista Farmers' Market on the 4th Saturday of every month.



See our Ballona Wetlands Scientists in Action!

**6th National Conference on Coastal Estuarine Habitat Restoration:
Restoring Ecosystems, Strengthening Communities.**

October 20-25, 2012
Tampa, Florida



Restore America's Estuaries' 6th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration is the only national conference focused on the goals and practices of coastal and estuarine habitat restoration. The five-day Conference will explore the state-of-the-art in all aspects and scales of restoration, and will be comprised of field sessions, plenary sessions, expert presentations, special evening events, workshops, a poster hall (in which we will be presenting a poster on our vegetation results in the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve), and the nation's only Restoration Exposition.

LA Audubon Bird Walks: Ballona Wetlands

3rd Sunday of the month, except for December.

Three hour walk. Scopes and binoculars helpful.

Time: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Leaders: Bob Shanman and Friends

Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon

6660 Esplanade Place,

Playa Del Rey, CA 90293.

Parking lot off 65th Avenue

Contact: Bob 310-326-2473

wbutorrance@gmail.com



Friends of Ballona Wetlands

Guided Tours of the Salt Marsh and Dunes:

Second Sunday of each month, 1:00-3:00 pm

An informative nature tour of the salt marsh and dunes. Learn about our coastal ecosystem and explore the wonders of nature right in the middle of urban Los Angeles.

Self-guided tours at the Salt Marsh and Dunes:

Second Saturday of each month, 2:00-4:00pm

A self-guided tour of the salt marsh and dunes where visitors are free to walk on trails unescorted, with docents at various stations to explain sights and answer questions.

Habitat Restoration Volunteer Days:

Come help the Friends restore one of the last coastal wetland habitat in Los Angeles County. Volunteers get hands-on experience while learning about wetland ecology. The Friends provide gloves and tools. Children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult.

Where to Meet:

Parking Lot behind Gordon's Market at 303 Culver Blvd., Playa del Rey

www.ballonafriends.org



Share Your Photos of the Ballona Wetlands

We're always in search of fantastic photographs of the wetlands and its plants and animals to be used on the Ballona Wetlands Restoration



Project's website and in our materials. If you have photos, we'd love to see them! To view past photo winners, visit the "Get Involved" link at our home page

www.ballonarestoration.org. To learn how you can help inform and inspire the public through the beauty of your photos contact Karina Johnston (kjohnston@santamonicabay.org)

Help Educate the Public about the Ballona Wetlands



Interested in learning more about the Ballona Wetlands and helping to inform the public about

this valuable ecosystem? Contact the California Department of Fish and Game's Volunteer Program for how to get involved (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/volunteer/>).

Also, visit the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project's partner page at <http://www.ballonarestoration.org/> for a list of additional organizations and agencies working on related issues.



Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force Update

On Tuesday, July 17, 2011, the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force held its regular bimonthly meeting to discuss current programs, projects and activities throughout the Ballona Creek Watershed and Wetlands. During the meeting a number of presentations were made, including:

- Water Quality Improvements at Del Rey Lagoon – Ryan Thiha; City of Los Angeles, Water Protection Div.-Bureau of Sanitation
- Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve: Cleanup – Michelle Renner; Mountain Resource Conservation Authority

Our wetlands team will continue to attend task force meetings to provide updates on the monitoring program and restoration planning. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 17 at its regular time from 10:00 am-Noon in the Dan Patacchia Room, Culver City Hall. If you have questions regarding the task force or wish to be added to the email list for future meetings and agendas, please contact Diana Hurlbert (dhurlbert@santamonicabay.org).

Governing Board Meetings

All Governing Board meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of even-numbered months (starting with February) at 9:30 a.m. at the Del Rey Yacht Club in Marina del Rey.

Remaining Dates for 2012:
October 18 and December 20

If you would like information about the meetings, agendas, staff reports, or other related items, we encourage you to first visit our partner organization's website at www.smbrc.ca.gov.

Otherwise, please contact **Scott Valor** at svalor@santamonicabay.org for information.

Internship and Volunteer Opportunities:

Assist with Scientific Monitoring and improve watershed health with the SMBRC

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and its partners has many programs and projects happening at any one time so there is always something great to participate in!



Interested in becoming a intern or volunteer?

Email Charlie Piechowski at:

cpiechowski@santamonicabay.org

Report the Wildlife You Observe!



Help inform the monitoring program and submit a report about what plants and animals you

observe when visiting the Ballona Wetlands. Please download the Plant and Wildlife Observation Form (www.ballonarestoration.org, under the Get Involved tab) for more information and then submit it electronically to Karina Johnston at kjohnston@santamonicabay.org or mail it to: Karina Johnston, 1 LMU Drive, Pereira Annex MS:8160, Los Angeles, CA 90045.



WHAT IS THE BALLONA WETLANDS RESTORATION PROJECT?



Stretching from Playa del Rey to Venice, the Ballona Wetlands once occupied a 2,000-acre expanse of critical coastal habitat. Currently covering an area of 600 acres, the Ballona Wetlands

Ecological Reserve is the largest and most promising opportunity for coastal wetland restoration in Los Angeles County.

The Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project is a long-term, science-based plan to return the Ballona Wetlands into a thriving ecological reserve. By healing this highly degraded site, the restoration project will create a diverse, resilient and dynamic ecosystem while providing a unique opportunity for the community to reconnect with southern California's natural heritage.



Stay Connected!



Fanatical about Facebook?

Tickled with Twitter?

Join the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr to stay informed and up-to-date on the exciting phases of the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project.



Tape Here
Do Not
Staple

-----Fold Here-----

Place Stamp
Here

Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project
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