



Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project

Advancing ecosystem health. Connecting communities with nature.

February 2013

www.ballonarestoration.org



WHAT'S NEW ON THE WETLANDS...2012 ANNUAL REPORT!

Features

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Wetlands in the News

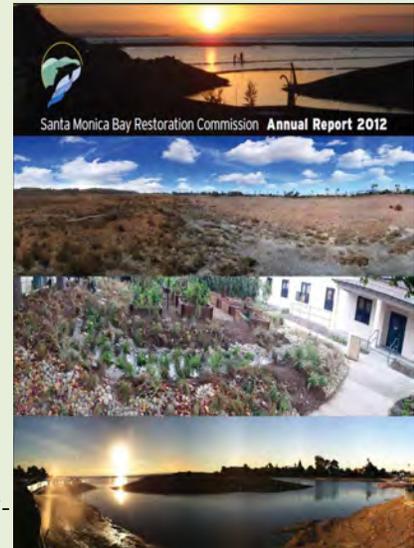
Upcoming Events and Activities

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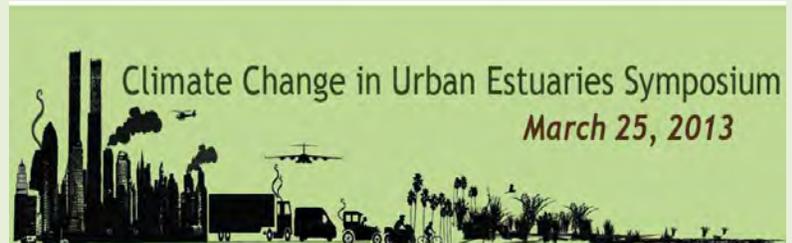
2012 was another exciting year of continuous progress toward the goals and objectives of the Bay Restoration Plan (BRP). It was especially rewarding because several important milestones were achieved. After clearing the last legal hurdle, the construction phase of the Malibu Lagoon restoration project got off the ground in June and has proceeded smoothly, heading toward a grand re-opening in 2013. We also saw the formal kick-off of the environmental review and permitting process for the Ballona Wetlands restoration project – a huge step forward, after many years spent acquiring and surveying the land, working with the public on needs and preferences, and conducting initial feasibility studies.

Visit santamonica.org for full report



Climate Change in Urban Estuaries Symposium

On Monday, March 25th, 2013, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission's Center for Santa Monica Bay Studies, the Center for Urban



Resilience (CURES), and Loyola Marymount University will be co-hosting the 3rd annual Urban Wetland Symposium at Loyola Marymount University. This scientific symposium will focus on the impacts of changing climate on the ecology and resilience of urban wetlands. Scientists from throughout California will be presenting on topics ranging from sea level rise to erosion and thermal stress. There will be morning and afternoon sessions, a keynote speaker, and a student Poster Session and cocktail hour. Please visit www.santamonica.org for the full agenda (end of feb.), Symposium Registration, and Poster Session Registration (bottom of Registration page).

Want to join our Mailing List?

Email Charlie Piechowski at cpiechowski@santamonica.org

We invite students and recent post-graduates to submit poster abstracts. Posters need not necessarily be directly related to climate change, but should address a scientific question relating to urban estuaries.

Whats New on the Wetlands...Restoration Update!



Ballona Creek Photo: Maria Wong

2012 was a busy year for the Ballona Wetlands Restoration project and SMBRF staff responsible for coordinating the project's environmental review and permitting. The formal environmental review of the proposed restoration project was kicked-off a public scoping meeting for the EIR/S on August 16, 2012 at the Fiji Way Gateway to the Wetlands with over 70 stakeholders attending. Staff also prepared and circulated the public notices and press releases for the scoping to the media in coordination with the Army Corp of Engineers and the CA Department of Fish &

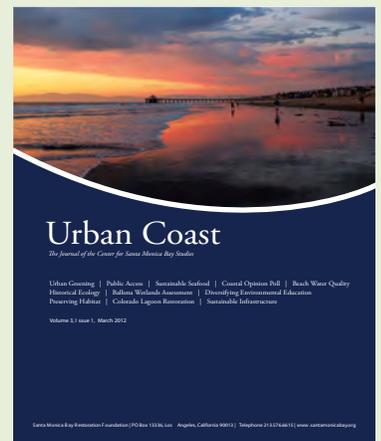
The technical team, coordinated by SMBRF, continued to refine work plans and construction phasing based on continued guidance of the PMT and SAC, including levee alternatives for West Area B and restoration options and monitoring to be addressed in the Adaptive Management Plan. Geotechnical field exploration was conducted across the site with field teams including Native American monitors, State Parks archeologists, and biological monitors to ensure protection of sensitive resources.

Facilitating discussions with partner agencies including the Army Corp of Engineers and LA County continues to be a major focus for SMBRF. Staff led a site visit of the Wetlands for Army Corp. 408 legal and technical staff members to enhance their understanding of the project's needs and purpose. SMBRF staff has been working with LA County Department of Public Works Executive and Flood Control Division staff to facilitate preparation and review of the 408 application materials, which would allow modifications to the existing flood control levees, and inter-agency MOU in support of the 214 funding agreement with the Army Corp of Engineers.

ALMOST HERE...

STAY TUNED FOR THE NEXT VOLUME OF URBAN COAST IN 2013!

The Urban Coast is a peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journal published by the Center for Santa Monica Bay Studies, a partnership of Loyola Marymount University's Seaver College of Science and Engineering and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation. The Urban Coast provides a much-needed forum for researchers, agencies, advocacy groups, and science and policy leaders to engage in constructive discussion and information exchange on issues pertinent to our coastal environments. It highlights the robust science, analysis, and assessment that catalyze good and practical policy, design, and management measures.



The theme of Volume 4 will be urban rivers and their contributions and significance to the urban coastal environment. The deadline for Volume 4 submissions has ended; however, submissions are accepted for scientific peer-review for future Volumes of the Journal on a rolling basis. We encourage you to contact us by email before your submission. All inquiries and submissions should be sent to Dr. Guangyu Wang (gwang@waterboards.ca.gov).

Science and policy topics covered by the journal are broad and inclusive. Topics featured in the previous issues of the journal include: Urban Greening, Low Impact Development, Beach Water Quality, Historical Ecology, Wetland Assessment and Restoration, Habitat Preservation, Climate Change Adaptation, Sustainable Seafood, Public Access, Environmental Education, Coastal Opinion Poll, Funding Challenge, etc. For previous issues of the Urban Coast, visit www.santamonica.org.



Annenbergs Announce Partnership with DFW for Interpretive and Educational Elements within the Restoration

According to the Annenberg's website: The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allows us to begin the technical process of including the proposed interpretive center as part of the draft EIR being prepared by CDFW. The draft EIR will be available for public comment later this year as we follow the CEQA process.

Among other goals, the project will provide opportunities to educate visitors on the ecological importance of wetlands, native habitat and how the community can interact with it in a responsible, respectful way. Encompassing about one acre, the interpretive center is only one small part of the effort. The primary objective is to create a world-class community resource by improving the habitat, expanding educational opportunities and increasing public access (today, access is virtually nonexistent and by permit only).

Working together, we are confident we can improve them.

Please see these websites for more information from the Annenbergs:

<http://www.annenbergfoundation.org/node/50770>

<http://www.annenbergfoundation.org/node/50771>

Revisions to the NOP announced - scoping comments due March 1st

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is issuing a revised Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an environmental impact report (EIR) to inform applicable public agencies and the public about refinements to the planned restoration of the Ballona Wetlands. View the full NOP announcement here: http://santamonicabay.org/BWRP/NOP_revised_FINAL_2013.01.25.pdf

Reminder: scoping comments are due by March 1st, 2013 to: Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project c/o Donna McCormick (see announcement for full contact information). Please note scoping comments previously submitted are already part of the administrative record and do not need to be resubmitted.

MALIBU LAGOON RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT PROJECT IS NEARING COMPLETION!



On June 1, 2012, California State Parks and its project partners, including the SMBRC, began the construction process for the Malibu Lagoon Restoration and Enhancement Project. The Lagoon was used for much of the last century as a dumping site for debris and construction waste and suffered from severe depletions in oxygen. This exciting project culminates nearly 20 years of rigorous scientific study and a planning process that engaged a diverse set of stakeholders, including multiple government agencies, scientific experts, residents, property owners, respected environmental organizations, the City of Malibu and other elected officials. The restoration continued throughout the summer and fall by removing excess sediment, re-contouring the western channels to improve water flows, and replacing invasive plants with native vegetation. The restoration will continue through early 2013 and will allow cleaner water to circulate supporting a greater diversity of fish, bird, and invertebrate species.



Grand Opening: Ballona Discovery Park!



Photo Credit: The Friends of Ballona Wetlands



Photo Credit: The Friends of Ballona Wetlands

With the opening of Ballona Discovery Park, a 1.7-acre open-air science and cultural center with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible trails and convenient public transit access, Friends of Ballona Wetlands expects to increase the diversity of visitors to the Wetlands each year. The Watershed Walk exhibit, and accompanying programs currently in development by the Friends and Loyola Marymount University (LMU), will begin new adventures for people and students of all ages, starting at the trailhead of the Ballona Wetlands in the community of Playa Vista and continuing into the adjacent Riparian Corridor and nearby Freshwater Marsh. Over fifteen years in the making, Ballona Discovery Park is a project of Loyola Marymount University, the community of Playa Vista, and the Friends of Ballona Wetlands. The Friends' existing suite of programs in the Saltwater Marsh and Dunes will be enhanced by these new education partnerships with LMU's Center for Urban Resilience, the Urban Ecology Institute, and Urban Science Corps. The Friends currently host over 9,000 children and adult visitors a year in the Freshwater and Saltwater Ballona Marshes as part of their Pre-K through graduate school education and restoration programs, in partnership with local Audubon Chapters who educate over 2,000 upper elementary school students of the 9,000 visitors who "Explore Ballona" every year. The Friends are also the "go to" non-profit representing the largest number of constituents interested in the long term restoration plans for the Ballona Wetlands, and they will continue to follow their mission to preserve and protect the Ballona Wetlands involving and educating the public as advocates and stewards.



LA Audubon Birk 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.

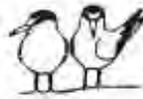
Leaders: Bob Shanman and Friends

Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon
6660 Esplanade Place,
Playa Del Rey, CA 90293.

Parking lot off 65th Avenue

Contact: Bob 310-326-2473

wbutorance@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

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



Come see the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project's booth, we are there one Saturday a month!



Red-Tailed Hawk: P. Tyrrell & The Friends of the Ballona Wetlands



Yellow-rumped Warblers: P. Tyrrell & The Friends of Ballona

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.



Photo Credit: J. Luker & California State Parks

Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force Update

On Tuesday, January 15, 2013, 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 Susan Rudnicki of Backwards Beekeepers and Ceebs Bailey of HoneyLove presented on practical urban of beekeeping.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2013 at its new 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.

Dates for 2013: February 21, April 18, June 20, August 15, October 17, December 19

If you would like information about the meetings, agendas, staff reports, or other related items, we encourage you to first visit our website at www.smbrc.ca.gov. Otherwise, please contact Scott Valor at svalor@santamonicabay.org for information.

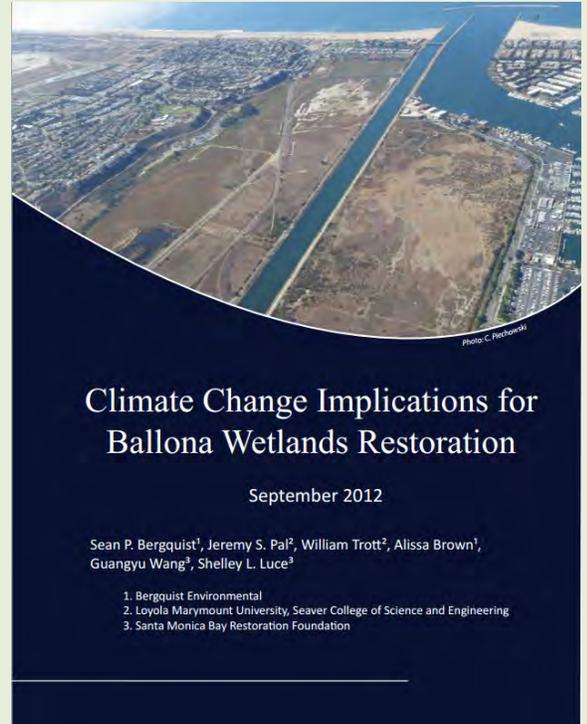
SMBRC Releases Landmark Climate Change Report

The Center for Santa Monica Bay Studies recently completed and published the results of a study on the implication of climate change for restoration of the Ballona Wetlands. The Ballona Wetlands are the last remaining major coastal wetlands in the Santa Monica Bay and Los Angeles County. Yet even the remaining wetland habitats are severely degraded due to the development of roads and railways, a marina, housing and businesses, and the channelization of Ballona Creek. After being acquired and designated as the state-owned Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (BWER) in 2004, multiple state agencies including the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission have been working with stakeholders to develop a plan to restore wetlands and other habitats. It has been widely recognized that in order to return the Ballona Wetlands to a diverse, resilient and dynamic ecosystem, the restored wetlands must be able to adapt to potential impacts of climate change.

The purpose of the Ballona Wetlands Climate Change study was to investigate the implications of climate change, especially potential changes in precipitation and sea level to the BWER. It is the first such study in Southern California that explored a new approach to integrate climatic and hydrological models for study of these impacts. The study applied multiple models to simulate the impacts of various sea level and precipitation scenarios to two wetland restoration alternatives under development. For sea level rise, the study applied the projection currently used by the state of California with 1.0 m and 1.4 m added to the present-day tidal levels. For precipitation, the study investigated a suite of extreme scenarios ranging from a 25% decrease to a 25% increase. In total, a suite of 36 model simulations are performed to investigate the inundation impacts of SLR and changes in extreme precipitation scenarios.

The results of the study demonstrate that in the event of SLR, habitats restored according to either alternative will experience various levels of impacts. But a restoration alternative that can accommodate the transgression of habitats upslope may provide more sustainability and support more diverse marsh habitats in the long term. The results of this study also validate one of the widely-held assumptions that tidal wetlands in southern California, including the BWER, are inherently highly vulnerable to SLR because they typically exist within a very narrow elevation range set primarily by the tidal frame (high and low tides), which is approximately 2 m in the region.

More significantly, the study demonstrates that the new, integrated modeling approach is feasible and can be applied to assessing the impacts of climate change on other coastal wetlands habitats. As the Ballona Wetland restoration planning process is still ongoing, and restoration alternatives are still evolving, this new modeling tools can also be used again at BWER to provide more representative and reliable assessment of the climate change impacts for the updated restoration alternatives.



Go to www.smbrc.ca.gov to download a PDF copy

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.

Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) Approves Wetland Restoration and Conservation as New Carbon Trading Category

(WASHINGTON)--A Restore America Estuaries-led (RAE) initiative aimed at creating greenhouse gas offset opportunities for coastal wetlands got final approval under the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) today, paving the way for increased private investment in wetland restoration and conservation projects through the issuance of internationally recognized carbon credits.

The new VCS requirements for Wetlands Restoration and Conservation (WRC) create a project category for measuring and crediting climate benefits from a broad range of wetlands, including mangroves, freshwater tidal coastal wetlands, salt marshes, seagrasses, floodplains, peatlands, and other wetland types.

The importance of the VCS wetland carbon credit registry cannot be overstated, according to Patrick Megonigal, Senior Scientist and Deputy Director, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. "This is the first carbon-crediting standard to advance conservation and restoration across the full diversity of the world's wetlands," said Megonigal.

For more information, or the full article, please visit www.estuaries.org



UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

We are pleased to announce an upcoming meeting of the SMBRC's Watershed Advisory Council (WAC). The meeting will be convened to review SMBRC's progress in implementing the Bay Restoration Plan (BRP) and receive suggestions from WAC members regarding how to update the goals, objectives, and milestones included in the existing BRP to address three priority issues: water quality, natural resources, and benefits and values to humans.

Input received at the meeting will help the SMBRC to complete a major update of the BRP later this year. More information, including an agenda and related materials, will be sent to you as the meeting date approaches.

We look forward to seeing you there!

When: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Wednesday, February 13, 2013

What: Santa Monica Bay Watershed Advisory Council Meeting

Location: Dockweiler Youth Center, 12505 Vista del Mar, Los Angeles, CA 90245

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 an 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.



bay restoration commission STEWARDS OF SANTA MONICA BAY