



Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project

Advancing ecosystem health. Connecting communities with nature.

May 2013

www.ballonarestoration.org



WHAT'S NEW IN THE WATERSHED!?

SMBRC and Culver City Win LA County Green Leadership Award!

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC), with partner City of Culver City, was awarded the Los Angeles County Green Leadership Award for a Public Agency for their Culver City Rainwater Harvesting Program (CCRH) program. The annual awards—recognizing outstanding and innovative energy conservation and environmental efforts by the private and public sectors—were presented on April 23rd by Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas, Chairman during the weekly Board of Supervisors meeting.



"We are excited to be selected for this program, the first of its kind in Culver City," states Damian Skinner, Environmental Programs & Operations Manager for the City of Culver City. "Community response has been really positive, and working with the SMBRC made implementing the program extremely easy and provided us the tools to continue the program in the future."

CCRH was developed to involve Culver City residents and property owners in local urban water management, through participating in best management practices on their properties. Normally, rainwater flowing over sidewalks, driveways and streets picks up pollutants (lead, copper, nitrate, phosphorous, bacteria) before flowing into storm drains and out to our rivers and beaches. Capturing rainwater from rooftops—before it becomes polluted runoff—protects our rivers and Santa Monica Bay and helps conserve water resources. Residents can use rainwater on their gardens and cut down on their water bills as well.

CCRH installed 396 rain barrels and redirected rainwater to gardens and lawns, while providing individualized landscape consultations to residents. CCRH also provided direct education to more than 1,000 residents at public events and through the distribution of literature online and in print. The rain barrels installed capture between 175,000 and 400,000 gallons of storm water that otherwise would have flowed into the Santa Monica Bay each year. The pilot program was also implemented to evaluate the overall cost and effectiveness of an ongoing rainwater-harvesting program.

Features

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Want to join our Mailing List?
Email Charlie at cpiechowski@santamonibay.org



MRCA Jr. Rangers Program Heads to the Wetlands!

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority proudly graduated the second Wetland Unit of Junior Rangers on May 28th. These Junior Rangers were high school students that went through a 10 lesson program which included lots of time out at the Ballona Wetlands and helped them gain new outdoor skills. A highlight for the youth was learning and using the scientific equipment used for the actual wetland monitoring program from BWER scientists. Utilizing the knowledge gained from all of those who taught them out at the wetlands, this group of Junior Rangers chose to create a short video for their community service project titled, "Ballona Wetlands: A Place to Call Home." A wonderful tribute to what the wetlands are for so many plants and animals.

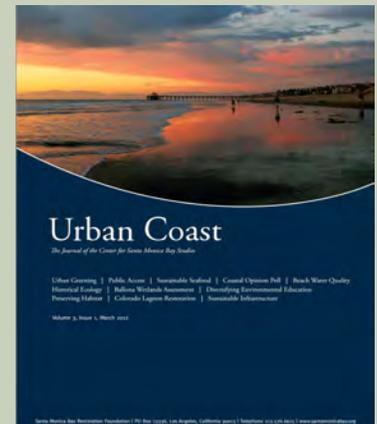
The MRCA Junior Ranger program would like to thank the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Boys and Girls Club of Venice, the Friends of Ballona Wetlands, the Audubon Society and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission for all of their help and support.



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.santamonicabay.org.

Malibu Lagoon Restoration and Enhancement Project Wraps Up Successfully!



Los Angeles, CA (May 3, 2013) – Malibu Lagoon officially reopened to public enjoyment on May 3rd, after an extensive restoration effort to bring the wetlands back to life.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), with project partners State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM), and Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC), held a ribbon cutting ceremony on the shores of the lagoon May 3 in celebration of one of the most ecologically significant wetlands restorations ever completed on the West Coast.

Project supporters State Assemblymember Richard Bloom and Senator Fran Pavley spoke at the event, along with representatives from the partner organizations. Local science students participated and experienced firsthand the new educational facilities at the Lagoon, led by volunteers from the Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society.

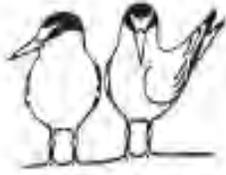
District 50 Assemblymember Richard Bloom, longtime supporter of the project, states, "This day marks a new beginning and a new lease on life for this lagoon. I'm proud of the extraordinary effort shown by all parties involved who were committed to cleaning up Malibu Lagoon and making it a place we can enjoy for generations to come."

The event celebrated how the restoration of Malibu Lagoon—on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency list of impaired water bodies for over a decade due to excess nutrients and low oxygen levels—is literally breathing new life into a habitat that daily is becoming healthier for birds, fish and all aquatic organisms.

DPR News Release. May 3, 2013.



Earth Day Celebrated at the Ballona Wetlands!



Friends of Ballona Wetlands

LMU|LA Center for Urban Resilience

Loyola Marymount University

This year we had the South Bay Wildlife Rehab (SBWR) folks out to dazzle us with Eddie, the recently partially rehabbed Great Horned Owl, who will become a teacher and advocate for the organization. The main attraction was the release of a completely rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk who was found shot in Palos Verdes and had been nursed back to life at SBWR. Our timing was very lucky, the Red Tail was ready for release!

Patrick and Christian welcomed everyone and led a moment of silence for our fellow Americans in Boston, who endured the Marathon ordeal.

Several large groups participated, from Lennox Academy High School to Loyola Marymount University (LMU) alumni members and college students. Lennox Academy Science teacher Vicente Perez, who initially invited just his students, joked that more than half the school came in multiple vans and cars provided by parents and teachers – it was that popular.

-Written By Lisa Fimiani



Photo Credit: The Friends of Ballona Wetlands



Baldwin Hills Habitat Restoration Project Underway!

This 2 ½ year project, now underway, is identifying, mapping and removing invasive non-native plants and restoring native vegetation to the Baldwin Hills Conservancy Territory. It is designed to achieve several goals of the Baldwin Hills Conservancy, including:

- Protect and restore natural habitat
- Protect and improve urban water quality
- Protect watersheds connecting to Santa Monica Bay

The project has held several volunteer work days since last fall at both Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area and the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. Volunteers dug out non-native invasive plants and grasses and planted native plants, using tools and plants supplied by the project. This Project will be a collaborative effort with stakeholders to improve and support habitat for wildlife - native insects, birds, and many other species - while improving trails, increasing recreational opportunities and reducing the risk of wildfire. BCR members have participated in these events.

Please find more info here: <http://www.ballonacreek.org/index.php/newsletters>

Thank you and Goodbye, Mayor Mike Gin!

For over six years, Redondo Beach Mayor Mike Gin has graciously served on the SMBRC Governing Board and as a Vice Chair on the Executive Committee. As his term as mayor is ending next month, Mayor Gin will be stepping down from the Governing Board. We are so appreciative and grateful for his dedication to the SMBRC's mission and goals through out his service.



Habitat Restoration Yields Long-term Benefits to Fisheries: Robust fisheries have a positive impact on the conservation and the economy

(Washington, D.C.) -- Restoring and expanding coastal and estuarine habitat leads to increases in fish populations, which have a positive impact on the communities and the industries that depend on thriving and sustainable fisheries.

A report released May 6th by Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) and the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) and



co-authored with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - More Habitat Means More Fish - makes a powerful case that investing in our nation's coastlines and estuaries leads to healthy habitat and strong fisheries, which has a positive impact on the businesses and industries, both recreational and commercial, that need healthy fisheries to survive and thrive.

The full report, More Habitat Means More Fish, is available via the RAE and ASA websites.

South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project!

This year, 2013, marks the 10th anniversary of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project.

It was in March 2003 that 26 square miles of land were transferred from Cargill Salt to state and federal land management agencies, after months of careful negotiations and preparations, setting the stage for the largest coastal wetlands restoration project in California history.



After the transfer, many people -- activists, agency and local government leaders, scientists, business representatives -- helped us craft a long-term restoration plan that sets an initial goal of turning a minimum of 50% of the area into tidal marsh. The plan calls for adaptive management, using strategically designed scientific studies to evaluate and refine our progress.

Since that time, Project managers have been working to transform the landscape in a way that will best support a diversity of plants and animals, from secretive marsh dwellers like the endangered clapper rail and salt marsh harvest mouse, to many species of fish, to the thousands of shorebirds who stop here along the Pacific Flyway to rest and nest.

For more info please go here: <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/documents/technical/2012sbannualreport.FINAL.pdf>

Stone Canyon Creek Restoration - June 22, 2013!

Please join the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation, and UCLA Lab School (ULS) to help restore the only remaining section of unburied creek on the UCLA campus.

The once mighty Stone Canyon Creek was a dominant feature of the UCLA campus in the past. Over the years, as the campus expanded, the creek was routed underground and now only this small segment running through the ULS campus and behind the Anderson School of Management remains. The vegetation that persists at the creek site is dominated by invasive vegetation which is choking out the few remaining native plant species.

Help us eliminate this infestation of invasive vegetation and replant the area with native vegetation. This is real work that will really benefit the environment. The newly established vegetation will serve as habitat to birds and other wildlife on campus. We will provide all the tools and training but we need your muscle! This activity is for volunteers age 14 and older.



Please RSVP here: <http://santamonicaabay.org/stonecreek.html>

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

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:

DFW's 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, see our Social Media for which Saturdays!



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 Wildlife. 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, March 19, 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 a number of presentations were made, including a presentation on The ReUse People of America - Arthur Renaud, The ReUse People.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday June 18th 2013 from 10:00 am-Noon in the Dan Patachia 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 at 9:30 a.m. at the Del Rey Yacht Club in Marina del Rey.

Dates for the rest of 2013: 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.

Internship and Volunteer Opportunities:

Assist with Scientific Monitoring and improve watershed health with the SMBRC

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and its partners have 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@santamonibabay.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@santamonibabay.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