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The Bay Foundation 5-Year Report on LAX Dunes 6-Acre Restoration Area Suggests a Healthy Dune Habitat

Efforts included 84 Restoration Events, 6,000 Volunteer Hours and 2,000 Participants Ranging from Kindergarteners to Local Business Groups

Los Angeles, CA (July 17, 2018) After five years of restoration efforts by Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), The Bay Foundation (TBF), and their partners, including Friends of the LAX Dunes (FOLD) and thousands of volunteers, the LAX Dunes Coastal Dunes Improvement Project (CDIP) area is a dramatically improved habitat with mostly native plants that supports an abundance of native and rare wildlife. As one of the largest coastal dune systems in Southern California, protection and restoration of the LAX Dunes is vital for regional conservation. A five-year post-restoration assessment conducted by TBF is summarized in a technical report called the *Los Angeles International Airport Coastal Dunes Improvement Project Ecological Monitoring Report* (report), just published and available [HERE](#).

“Through focused efforts, Los Angeles World Airports, The Bay Foundation, and our partners have made a significant, positive impact on the health of the native plants and wildlife in the LAX Dunes Coastal Dunes Improvement Project area,” said Samantha Bricker, Deputy Executive Director of the Environmental Programs Group, LAWA. “Environmental stewardship is a priority at LAX, and we will continue to restore and protect our local habitats.”

The change at the LAX Dunes CDIP area has been dramatic. The area, once part of the former Surfridge housing development, included abandoned streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, retaining walls, foundations, above-ground utilities, and non-native invasive plants. In 2013, LAWA was granted a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) to implement the CDIP, and TBF began participating as stakeholder scientists. In accordance with the CDP, LAWA removed approximately four acres of roads, infrastructure, and concrete; culled acres of non-native invasive plant species; scattered native seeds and planted vegetation; and in support of these activities, developed their “Adopt-A-Dune” program and co-founded FOLD.

In 2015, TBF’s partnership with LAWA was expanded significantly by leading monthly volunteer restoration events. Thousands of volunteers — including L.A. area students, businesses and other organizations — have engaged with the dunes, as well as TBF interns who have gained fieldwork experience through monitoring and data collection.



[TBF's report](#)—which summarizes initial restoration efforts and post-restoration habitat maintenance activities as part of the CDIP—identifies that the dune site is successfully meeting the restoration criteria.

Highlights from the report include:

- Areas that were roads and sidewalks, are now healthy dune habitat;
- Restoration areas support an abundance of wildlife, including Blainville's horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*) and Southern California legless lizard (*Anniella stebbinsi*), among others;
- An estimated 84 restoration events since 2013 have been held by TBF and partners, with more than 2,000 participants committing more than 6,000 volunteer hours;
- More than 2,500 bags of invasive, non-native plants have been removed from the restoration area; and
- Continued public participation opportunities to engage the public in supporting the improved health and condition of a rare, regionally-important habitat, through monthly and special events.

"The unique community of plants and animals that exist at the LAX Dunes are clearly worth protection. The community of people that have contributed to this successful effort are clearly worth celebrating!" said Tom Ford, TBF Executive Director. "I am proud, thankful and deeply appreciative to the thousands of people who have dedicated their time, treasure, and talents to this project. As far as we've come, there is still a great more to do... so, if you haven't contributed, join us; if you have contributed, please come back, enjoy the familiar faces, and expand this great work."

The dunes continue to provide opportunities to engage communities across the City and bring inner city and underserved youth to an outdoor hands-on learning classroom. Students have played a significant volunteer role, starting with FOLD co-founder (and then Girl Scout) Ayanna Neal. Through a California State Coastal Conservancy Explore the Coast grant to TBF, students and youth have increasingly participated in LAX Dunes restoration events with a majority of the students aged K-12 (approximately 75% of students) and the other 25% as college- and university-level students. Over 70% of students surveyed came from disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities. The LAX Dunes has also served as a designated site for the popular international Coastal Cleanup Day and "Big Sunday" events.

Beyond the students, volunteer community engagement has included many universities; businesses such as Patagonia, Apple, Verizon, and AT&T; and organizations such as California Native Plant Society, Girl and Boy Scouts of America, and various civic and religious groups. During TBF-led restoration events, volunteers learn about the site's historical, cultural, and environmental importance, and come to understand the dunes as part of a living shoreline.

TBF is currently working with LAWA to continue comprehensive monitoring, continue and expand habitat restoration, and inform short-term and long-term management of the site.

For more information and volunteer opportunities at the LAX Dunes: www.santamonicabay.org.



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World Airports*

About The Bay Foundation

The Bay Foundation (TBF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit environmental group founded in 1990 to restore and enhance the Santa Monica Bay and local coastal waters (from the LA-Ventura county line to the Palos Verdes Peninsula). The Bay Foundation is a partner in the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program along with the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and many other organizations. TBF works collaboratively with a broad group of stakeholders, including government agencies, industry, environmental groups, and community members. TBF engages scientists and conducts research while mentoring student interns and volunteers in conjunction with the Frank R. Seaver College of Science and Engineering through the Coastal Research Institute at Loyola Marymount University. (TBF: www.santamonicabay.org, CRI: lmu.edu/cri)

About Los Angeles World Airports

Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) is the City of Los Angeles department that owns and operates Los Angeles International (LAX) and Van Nuys (VNY) general aviation airports, as well as aviation-related property in Palmdale. Both play an integral role in helping to meet the Southern California regional demand for passenger, cargo and general aviation service. Both airports make a distinct contribution to the strength of the system as it provides a high level of safety, security and service for its customers, communities and stakeholders. More information can be found at flylax.com. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities. Alternative formats in large print, braille, audio, and other forms (if possible) will be provided upon request.

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