

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Thank you for taking a look at our annual report and to all the partners who contributed to the progress illustrated on the following pages. The Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program, continued to generate impactful progress towards our overarching goals despite the enormity of challenges and uncertainty that 2020 embodied. I am proud of and humbled by the efforts of my many colleagues in this ecosystem-wide approach to improve, sustain, and protect our coast, bay, and watershed.

As an ecologist, with twenty-five years of experience, I understand that life is made possible on this planet by life! Accordingly, our preference is to allow and enable more life and restore connection where it's been lost. In doing so natural processes can clean our water, grow our coast, pull carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and shelter wildlife.

This is accomplished by numerous investments and projects that benefit our collective future in Los Angeles. You can learn more in the following pages and embedded links.

I hope you enjoy the report and get engaged in our pursuit of a living world.

Best Wishes,

Tom Ford
Director, Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program



Tom Ford, Director of the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program

2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

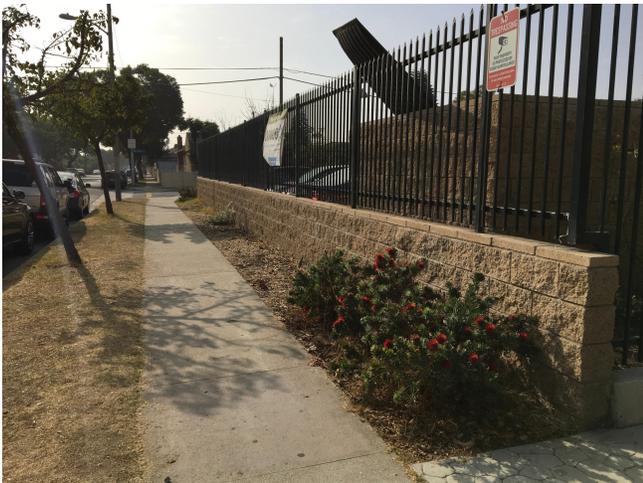
Table to Farm Program

The Table to Farm Composting for Clean Air project, initiated in 2016, is a collaborative network of schools, students, food service establishments, local non-profit organizations, and the community at large working to create local solutions to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions while increasing local food production in underserved communities. This project connects food service establishments with local compost hubs for the diversion of pre-consumer food waste from the landfill. Nutrient-rich compost is then used in gardens that grow fresh local produce for the community. Compost hubs are located at Environmental Charter Schools' three campuses to teach students about food equity, air pollution, carbon sequestration, food waste, composting, and gardening.

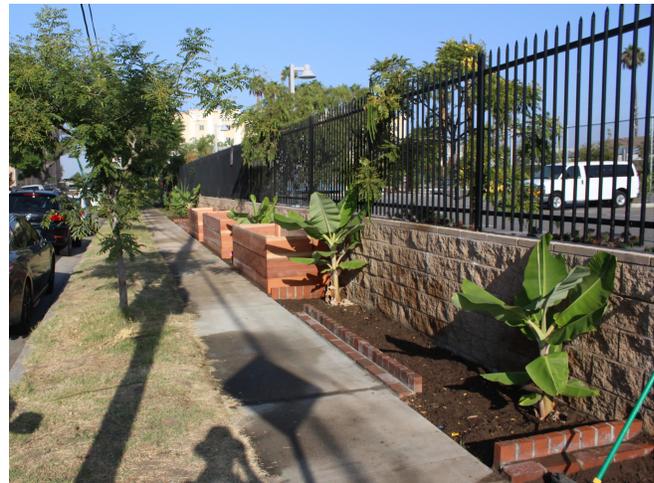


Compost hub at Environmental Charter Middle School - Inglewood, CA

In 2020, a community garden comprised of three raised garden beds and two in-ground beds was established outside of Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood's (ECMS-I) gates. This garden is available to all community members. During this reporting period, 436 ECMS-I students and community members learned about the garden and 72 individuals gave input on garden design and implementation.



Before garden bed and in-ground garden installation



After garden bed and in-ground garden installation

LAX Dunes Restoration

The LAX Dunes is the largest remaining remnant contiguous coastal dune system in southern California. The 302-acre dune site is owned and managed by Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA). The site provides habitat for over 900 species, including the beautiful and delicate federally endangered El Segundo Blue Butterfly. During this period, TBF continued coordination and work with LAWA and partners on revegetation efforts, restoration planning, and scientific monitoring of the LAX Dunes. Lead botanist project partner, California Botanic Garden, conducted seed collection and vegetation surveys; project ornithologist, Cooper Ecological Monitoring performed several avian surveys, including a targeted burrowing owl survey.



Watershed Programs staff monitoring LAX Dunes site



LAX Dunes site

Scientific consulting partner and restoration ecologists, Coastal Restoration Consultants, advised on planning for future restoration activities and drafting the Ecological Landscape Plan. In March 2020, TBF halted public community events as required by LA County Public Health due to COVID-19.

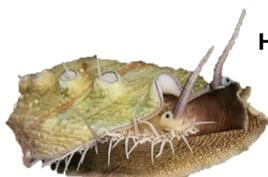
Abalone Restoration



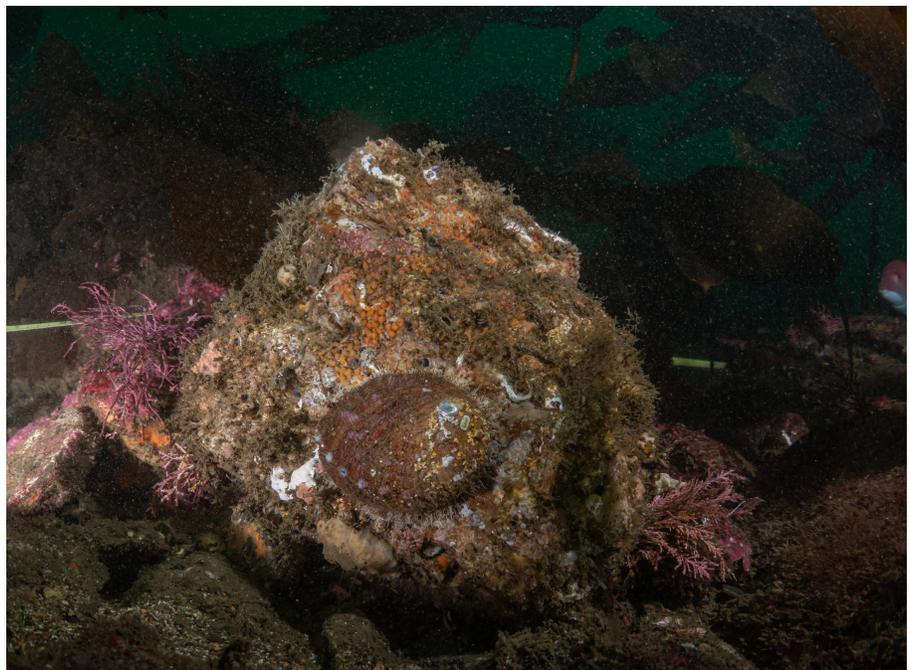
Marine Programs staff in the abalone lab at the Southern California Marine Institute (SCMI)

This project implements a multifaceted approach to research and method development to restore populations of abalone to Santa Monica Bay and adjacent coastal waters. TBF manages two abalone laboratories located at the Southern California Marine Institute (SCMI) to advance research on captive and wild abalone care, spawning, and larval cultivation techniques. The primary focus of this work has been to support the recovery of the endangered white abalone. In June 2020, over 5,000 juvenile white abalone were transferred from the Bodega Marine Lab to SCMI, facilitated by two volunteer pilots coordinated through LightHawk. Abalone were held and cared for in TBF's facility. Nearly 2,000 white abalone have been outplanted to the Palos Verdes peninsula since 2019.

These were the first animals of their species to ever be outplanted into the wild. TBF staff and partners conducted quarterly surveys, monitoring live abalone and collecting shells to inform the success of outplanting efforts.



Hey, that's me.



White abalone outplanted to the Palos Verdes peninsula

Beach Characterization Studies

In partnership with Loyola Marymount University's Coastal Research Institute (CRI), this research program is conducting a beach characterization study and informing a Site Suitability Model (SSM) to determine potential areas for beach restoration, evaluating factors such as coastal infrastructure, sea level rise vulnerability, and physical and biological characteristics, while contributing information to the SMBNEP Comprehensive Monitoring Program. By jointly considering the threats and potential for restoration, this project will help identify approaches to protect these valued and iconic beaches.



CRI student intern

During this reporting period, data from 11 beaches were compiled and analyzed, and preliminary meetings with SSM partners, LACDBH and State Parks occurred in summer 2020. Summary results from both projects were presented at the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association National Conference in October (one oral presentation and four poster presentations) and in other virtual venues such as Los Angeles Regional Climate Collaborative meetings. Work continued evaluating and combining GIS layers for the site suitability analysis.

Discussions with coastal municipalities and agencies will continue to inform the future use of the SSM. The model will eventually be analyzed against the ongoing in situ data collection along beaches of the SM Bay as part of this research program.



CRI faculty and student interns

Palos Verdes Reef Restoration Project - Construction Complete!

The Proposition 12-funded [Palos Verdes Reef Restoration Project](#) by the Southern California Marine Institute and Vantuna Research Group aims to restore rocky reef habitat and its ecological community, offsetting historical losses to ecosystem services. In September 2020, the project completed construction of an artificial reef by strategically placing 57,000 tons of quarry rock in a 42-acre area near Bunker Point off the Palos Verdes Peninsula.



Images by Dan Pondella

Check out the [project video](#) for the history of the site, benefits of the project, and the construction process!

Upcoming SMBRC Governing Board Meeting Dates

- June 17, 2021
- August 19, 2021
- October 21, 2021
- December 14, 2021

As a result of the COVID-19 emergency, meetings will occur solely via remote presence, at least for the June meeting. Links for the [Governing Board meeting](#) will be posted approximately one week in advance of the meeting.

Take a deeper dive into the partnerships and efforts of the SMBNEP, access the [2020 SMBNEP SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS](#)

Get Involved!



Please contact Dane (dlazarus@santamonicabay.org) if you are interested in volunteering for one of our programs. Also, check TBF's [Events Page](#) for upcoming events.

Meet SMBNEP & Its Collaborators



- [SMBRC Governing Board](#)
- [SMBRC - Staff Assigned](#)
- [The Bay Foundation Staff](#)

[Learn more about us!](#)

[Financial Summary \(October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020\)](#)

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