



Summer has arrived!

HOORAH FOR SUMMER! It's that wonderful time of year here on the wetlands as the June-gloom gives way to warm sunny days. The wetlands are buzzing with activity from the swarms of research interns to the flocks of cute killdeer chicks. Critters of all sorts seem to be enjoying the warm weather and getting out and about as our critter cams show in the feature below. Next time you are near the wetlands on a 3rd Saturday of the month consider , dropping by our Open House events to have family fun in the summer sun!

What's New on the Wetlands

'Critter Cam' Corner

With summer in full swing at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, surveys for all sorts of critters continue. One of these types of surveys utilizes motion cameras to record larger mammal activity on site. These surveys are continuous during the dry seasons and capture many different types of mammals, such as raccoons, coyotes, and even California ground squirrels. They also record non-native species common to the site, including: Virginia opossum, domestic dogs, and feral cats. One of our more common visitors: *Homo sapiens*!

For additional photos and video from our Critter Cams, please check out our Flickr (www.flickr.com/ballonarestoration), Facebook (www.facebook.com/ballonarestoration), and Youtube (www.youtube.com/ballonarestoration) sites.



Friendly night visitor checking out the Critter Cam (photo: raccoon, *Procyon lotor*).



Out for an evening trek through the Reserve (left photo: coyote, *Canis latrans*).



Uh oh! Off leash dogs = bad news for native wetland species and birds! (right photo)

Scientific Monitoring Update - Baseline Monitoring Program Makes News

As the first year Ballona Wetlands Baseline Assessment Report undergoes the final stages of internal review before distribution, our site-wide monitoring continues throughout the summer. We have been pleased to keep you up-to-date on our activities through this newsletter, our social networking sites (see links on page 7), and website (www.ballonarestoration.org). We were excited when Kristin Agostoni of the Daily Breeze wanted to find out more about our scientific monitoring program. We spent a couple hours giving her team a brief introduction into some of our monitoring strategies, including water quality testing and vegetation surveys. For more information, and to see her account of the adventure, please view her article in the Daily Breeze, "Assessing the Wetlands": http://www.dailybreeze.com/news/ci_18352693

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation Awarded Community Wetlands Restoration Grant!

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation (SMBRF) was recently awarded a grant to restore portions of the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve through removal of several highly invasive species by local community members. The hands-on project will focus on engaging and educating community members from North East Los Angeles, South Los Angeles, Venice, Compton, and multiple High Schools throughout LA County, about the value of wetlands and the threats faced by wetland habitats. The target community members are those not currently involved in wetland restoration efforts in the hopes of broadening awareness and advocacy of wetlands in general and the Ballona Wetlands in particular.

The one year effort will allow the SMBRF to work with youth and community participants to remove *Arundo donax*, commonly referred to as giant reed, from various locations within the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve and target specific *Arundo donax* locations upstream along the main channel of Ballona Creek for eradication. The process will educate the community about non-native and invasive vegetation and the need to remove it in order to return wetlands to a healthy condition.

The project is in partnership with Urban Semillas, the Boys and Girls Club of Venice, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), the LA Conservation Corps' LA River Keepers and their Eco-Academy school in the Pico-Union neighborhood. Collaboration is important to ensure that the information and activities delivered are relevant to the community members both in content and in language. The project plans to develop outreach materials in both Spanish and English in order to reach and engage the broadest possible audience.

What's New in the Watershed

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Unveils New Signage Program along Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path

Los Angeles — July 5, 2011 - The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) announced today the installation of a comprehensive and stylish new signage and public safety enhancement program along the popular 7.2 mile Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path which extends through Culver City and the city of Los Angeles towards the Santa Monica Bay. The major improvement project, funded by a State of California Natural Resources Agency River Parkways Grant, includes twelve coordinated interpretive exhibits, 14,000 linear



feet of new bike path striping, and seven coordinated Ballona Creek identification signs. A Los Angeles County Proposition A matching fund grant provided by Los Angeles County Proposition A provided for additional improvements including planting, seating, and water fountains at gateways to the bike path.

The Ballona Creek Signage Project is the latest of many public works projects and improvements to the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path completed by the MRCA in the last five years. Recently, the MRCA

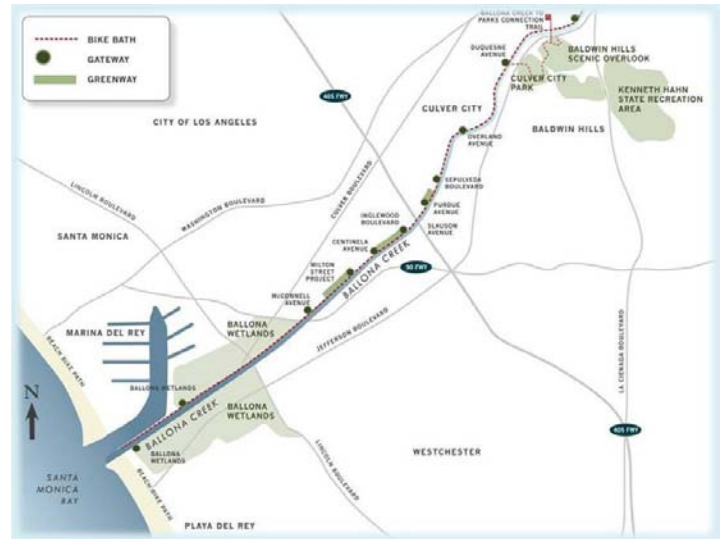
designed and constructed new landscaping and improvements to the gateway at Duquense Avenue, and constructed a loop trail connecting Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook to Culver City Park and the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path. The MRCA also improved gateways to the trail and bike path at Sepulveda Boulevard, Inglewood Boulevard, McConnell Avenue, and Centinela Avenue. All of the gateways now include newly-installed interpretive signs.



The interpretive signs include information about local birds, native plants, fish, the watershed, the history of the creek, and the geology the of Baldwin Hills which can be prominently seen travelling east on the bike path. Also included are aerial locator maps at key locations which help to identify area parks, bike routes, various access points to the bike path, and information about how the public can help keep Ballona Creek and the Santa Monica Bay clean.

Future MRCA projects in the works on Ballona Creek include the 0.6-mile Greenway funded by Los Angeles County Proposition A and Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, and the Milton Street Park which will develop a 1.2-acre multiple-benefit park incorporating "clean water" solutions to use and filter stormwater before it goes into the creek.

All of the projects are part of a larger regional effort to connect Baldwin Hills to the Pacific Ocean with one continuous bikeway and greenway known as "Park to Playa." The Park to Playa plan seeks to improve public access and safety along Ballona Creek, and provide connectivity to the beach, other bicycle paths, and the Ballona Wetlands, to encourage recreational use and opportunities to interpret the natural systems of the Ballona Creek Watershed.



For more information:

Dash Stolarz
 Director of Public Affairs
 Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
 (323) 221-9944 x198

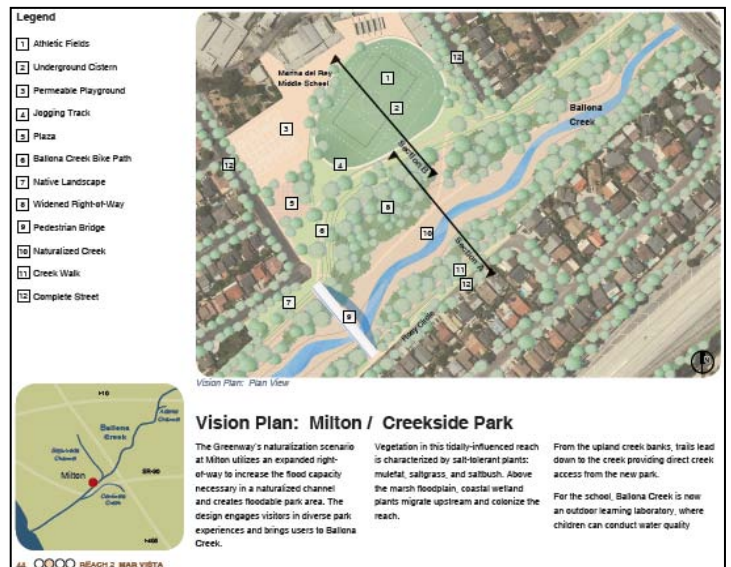
Award Winning Ballona Creek Greenway Plan!

Congratulations to the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force members, their Greenway Plan has won the 2011 Westside Urban Design Award for best Plan. Check out the link below to view the announcement and the other winners!

http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ui/2011DesignWinners_Rev.pdf

The Ballona Creek Greenway Plan is the result of collaboration between the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC). The Task Force is comprised of state and local agencies, environmental organizations, private businesses, and resident stakeholders. The group sought to build upon the 2004 Ballona Creek Watershed Management Plan (which has many exciting ideas for improving the health of the watershed and channel), and produced the Greenway Plan as a follow-up document.

You can download the entire Ballona Creek Green Plan or selected sections by visiting the SMBRC home page. <http://santamonicabay.org>



Culver City Rainwater harvesting Program

The City of Culver City and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission have partnered to implement a city-wide rainwater harvesting program. The program offers the first 500 Culver City residents and commercial properties in the community the opportunity to receive a professionally installed rain barrel at a drastically reduced rate. The use of rain barrels provides a number of

environmental benefits, including reducing the amount of polluted runoff entering the oceans, recharging groundwater supplies, and reducing the amount of potable water used for irrigation. Do your part for the environment and your community by signing up now at

<http://ballonawatershed.org/CCrainwater.html>.

Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force Update

On Tuesday, May 17, 2011, the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force held its regular bi-monthly 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:

- Presentation on LAUSD Students Working in the Watershed– Stacey Vigallon; Los Angeles Audubon
- Presentation on TMDL Monitoring in Ballona Creek – Ida Meisami; City of LA- Dept. of Public Works

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, July 19 at a 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 aemail list for future meetings and agendas, please contact Diana Hurlbert (dhurlbert@santamonicabay.org).

Wetlands in the News

Degraded Coastal Wetlands Contribute To Climate Change: Report Finds

Washington DC – April 11, 2011 – Drainage and degradation of coastal wetlands emit significant amounts of carbon dioxide directly to the atmosphere and lead to decreased carbon sequestration, a new World Bank report has found.

The report, written in partnership with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)



and wetland specialists ESA PWA, calls for coastal wetlands to be protected and incentives for avoiding their degradation and improving their restoration to be included into carbon emission reduction strategies and in climate negotiations.

The report highlights the current rates of degradation and loss of coastal wetlands which are up to four times that of tropical forests. Unlike terrestrial forests, these marine ecosystems are continuously building carbon pools, storing huge amounts of “blue carbon” in the sediment below them. When these systems are degraded due to drainage or conversion for

agriculture and aquaculture, they emit large and continuous amounts of CO₂ to the atmosphere.

“Protecting these coastal ecosystems and the blue carbon they store can be a win-win for communities,” says Marea Hatzios, Senior Coastal and Marine Specialist at the World Bank, who oversaw production of the report. *“If wetlands conservation can be linked to carbon markets, communities have a way to pay for conservation which will generate local and global benefits.”*

According to the report, managing coastal ecosystems for the range of services they provide can complement existing approaches to nature-based solutions to reduce the effects of climate change.

Such investments have the potential to link to REDD+ and other carbon financing mechanisms, provided that protocols on accounting, verification and reporting of net carbon uptake can be agreed.

“We must work with nature to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also restore the ability of nature to take carbon out of circulation,” says Carl Gustaf Lundin, Head of the IUCN Global Marine and Polar Programme. *“CO₂ emissions from lost or degraded coastal wetlands are sufficiently large to warrant amendment of national and international climate change policy frameworks to reduce rates of loss and promote restoration.”*

To read the full report visit:

www.worldbank.org/icm

For more information:

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Upcoming Events & Activities

Community Open House Events

3rd Saturday of every month, 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Fiji Gateway

13720 Fiji Way

Marina del Rey, CA 90292

(Across from Fisherman’s Village)

Guided tours will depart from the trailhead at 10:00am, 11:00am, and 12:00am.

Farmers’ Markets

- Playa Vista Farmers’ Market: 2nd Saturday of every month
- Westchester Farmers’ Market: varies (check social media)
- Mar Vista Farmers’ Market: varies (check social media)

For further information on events, volunteer opportunities, or docent training sessions email Elena Tuttle at etuttle@santamonicabay.org or call (310) 417-3962.



Local Events

July 23, Saturday – Ballona Creek Clean-Up

At 9 am, the Marvin/Curson/Carmona Ave Watch Club will be hosting a clean up along Ballona Creek between Thurman Ave and Rigdeley Drive in the Los Angeles mid-city area. We will meet on Hauser Ave, between Washington Blvd and Venice Blvd at Ballona Creek. For more information or questions contact George Gentry at lamincgentry@yahoo.com

July 23, Saturday – Ballona Creek Clean-Up (Continued)

At 9:30am-12:30pm, Ballona Wetlands and Creek Volunteer Restoration and Cleanup, co-sponsored by Friends of Ballona Wetlands and Ballona Creek Renaissance; enter behind Gordon's Market, 303 Culver Blvd., Playa Del Rey, CA 90292. For details, visit the Friend's calendar at www.ballonafriends.org

August 13, Saturday – Grand Opening of Ballona Discovery Park & Friends of Ballona Wetlands 'Moonlight on the Marsh'

Friends of Ballona Wetlands invite you to join them for a celebratory evening in the new Ballona Discovery Park beginning at 5:30 pm. The 1.7-acre open-air science and cultural center at the trailhead of the Ballona Wetlands provides a gateway experience to the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve. For more information call 310-306-5994 or e-mail info@ballonafriends.org

September 17, Saturday – Coastal Clean-Up

Annual Coastal Clean-up events will be held on and around the wetlands.

- A clean-up event will be held at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve. For more information contact Patrick Tyrell, Friends of Ballona Wetlands 310-306-5994
- A water-based "kayak" clean-up of Marina del Rey will launch from Dock 52 on Fiji Way. For more information contact Michelle Kearney at mkearney@waterboards.ca.gov or 213-576-6648

September 24, Saturday – National Estuary Day

Observed on the last Saturday of September each year, National Estuaries Day is a terrific opportunity to learn more about estuaries and the perfect excuse to spend a day on the bay. Events will be occurring across the country. For more information on planned events in your local estuary, check out: <http://www.estuaries.org/national-estuaries-day.html>

Get Involved

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! Contact Karina Johnston (kjohnston@santamonicabay.org) to learn how you can help inform and inspire the public through the beauty of your photos. To view past photo winners, visit the "Get Involved" link at our homepage www.ballonarestoration.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 (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/volunteer/>) for how to get involved. 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.

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.

Follow the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project on:



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.

