



# bay restoration commission

STEWARDS OF SANTA MONICA BAY

santa monica bay restoration commission 320 west 4<sup>th</sup> street, ste 200; los angeles, california 90013  
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## Press Release

### Southern California Urban Wetland Research Symposium

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*Who:* Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission  
*What:* Southern California Urban Wetland Research Symposium  
*Where:* Loyola Marymount University  
*When:* Monday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012; 8:00am-6:00pm

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Joy Zedler, University of Wisconsin

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Coastal wetlands are a meeting of ocean and land and are extremely valuable ecologically, economically, and, of course, aesthetically. Unfortunately, many of these wetland systems have suffered a significant number of human impacts and have been reduced in Southern California by over 90%! Thankfully, in some places in Southern California, there are opportunities to restore degraded habitats to healthy wetland systems that benefit both humans and wildlife. Wetland research and monitoring programs help us understand the conditions and functionality of wetlands; this understanding is imperative for developing appropriate restoration actions and management decisions. Research symposia are an important part of advancing our collective understanding while helping to form a community of informed and engaged individuals who will help these imperiled wetland systems that we all love.

On Monday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission's Center for Santa Monica Bay Studies, the Center for Urban Resilience and Ecological Solutions (CURES), and Loyola Marymount University co-hosted the annual Southern California Urban Wetland Research Symposium at Loyola Marymount University. **The symposium was a full house, blockbuster success with 180 attendees!** The scientific symposium brought scientists from across southern California to present and highlight monitoring and research being performed at wetlands throughout the region. This exciting scientific symposium was open to the public, agency stakeholders, and other scientists in the region. Scientists presented information and data being collected for applications both towards answering research questions and how that information can be applied towards assisting policy and restoration actions.

We were incredibly lucky to have Dr. Zedler, one of the world's premier wetland scientists, as our keynote speaker for this year's Symposium. Currently a Professor of Botany and Aldo Leopold Chair in Restoration Ecology at the University of Wisconsin, her research focuses on restoration ecology, wetland ecology, reestablishment of rare plants, adaptive management and interactions of native and exotic species. Dr. Zedler has been instrumental in implementing wetland research and restoration projects throughout southern California for many years. Her level of dedication

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is immeasurable. **Her keynote presentation shared some of her knowledge gained in restoration activities throughout the United States and some lessons learned for the future of wetland restoration in southern California. She also expounded on the ideas that we must look to the future when evaluating these restoration plans, including climate change, and make them an adaptive process.**

Jessica Hall and Lisa Fimiani were each awarded an “Excellence in Environmental Stewardship” Award by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation for their work in our wetlands, streams, and watersheds. Lisa Fimiani is currently the executive director of the Friends of Ballona Wetlands and has focused on guiding the 33 year old non-profit into the next decade by strengthening partnerships and reaching more people - especially children and students - with tours, education and restoration programs in the Ballona Wetlands. Jessica Hall is the co-founder of the phenomenal LA Creek Freak blog and has worked tirelessly to map historical streams and bring them into the ‘light’, working to daylight Los Angeles’ forgotten streams.

The day ended with a hosted outdoor cocktail hour and student poster session in the sculpture garden overlooking the Westchester Bluffs, with a spectacular view of the wetlands and our watershed. It was a great time to meet and exchange ideas with other wetland fanatics of all ages; learning, sharing, and communicating the current research that is happening along our beautiful Southern California coast. The student posters were extremely well received and we thank them for their hard work! The posters were:

- *“Breaking the Bank: Unlocking the Secrets of the Ballona Wetlands Seed Bank.”* 2012. Matt Hardke. Loyola Marymount University.
- *“Tracking Wildlife Between the Loyola Marymount University Campus and the Playa Vista Riparian Corridor Using Remote Sensing Cameras.”* 2012. Courtney McCammon. Loyola Marymount University.
- *“Mammal Use of the Ballona Wetlands.”* 2012. Janel Ortiz. Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, Intern.
- *“An Uneven Playing Field: Assessing Vegetation & Elevation.”* 2012. Elena Del Giudice-Tuttle, Ivan Medel, Charlie Piechowski, and Karina Johnston. Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, Los Angeles, CA

## ***Morning presentations:***

Karina Johnston, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, “Monitoring on the Move: Wetland Assessment Development from Baseline to Regional.”

Dr. Gary Kuleck, Loyola Marymount University, “The Prevalence of Antibiotic-Insensitive Bacteria in the Ballona Wetlands and Del Rey Lagoon.”

Dr. Terri Hogue, University of California, Los Angeles, “An Investigation of Ballona Creek Watershed Hydrology: Partitioning Native and Imported Source Contributions and their Uncertainties.”

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Dr. Eric Stein, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, “Historical Condition of Southern California Estuaries and Lagoons: Analysis of Mouth Closure Patterns.”

**Keynote:** Dr. Joy Zedler, University of Wisconsin, “Restoring Urban Wetlands: Novel Approaches for a Novel Future.”

***Afternoon presentations:***

Dr. Sean Anderson, California State University, Channel Islands, “Landscape Fragmentation in Coastal Southern California: The Effects of Roads on Mobile Vertebrates.”

Dr. Christine Whitcraft, California State University, Long Beach, “If You Restore It, Will They Come? Functional Restoration Trajectories in a Southern California Wetland.”

Dr. Victor Carmona, Loyola Marymount University, “Learning Communities as a Model for Long-Term Ecological Research.”

Dr. Eric Strauss, Loyola Marymount University, “Considering the Ballona Wetlands from the Perspective of Ecosystem Services and the Role of Local Stakeholders in Restoration and Management.”

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