



Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project

Advancing ecosystem health. Connecting communities with nature.



March 2015 Newsletter

The Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve restoration planning process has undergone significant changes throughout the winter season. Click on the links below for new information recently released by the lead agency, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and their project partners. For updates



on the Draft Environmental Impact Report process, see below, or visit the project website: www.ballonarestoration.org.

CDFW & Partners Clean Up the Reserve

In January and February of 2015 over 9½ tons of trash, homeless debris, and construction debris was removed from the BWER, primarily from Areas A and C. This is in addition to the approximately 15 tons of trash removed in 2014. During the same period, the Department of Fish & Wildlife (Department), L.A County Sheriff's Department, and Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority ([MRCA](#)) Rangers have



initiated more than weekly enforcement and eviction actions for illegal camping, stolen bicycles, and drug possession. The Department, with extremely limited resources and help from local partners, has worked tirelessly to keep up with fence

hole repairs related to illegal camping and other activities in the Reserve. Recently, fence repairs have been focused behind the businesses that are adjacent to the Reserve near the end of Culver Blvd.

Local residents continue to damage fencing to illegally access the Reserve for morning and evening dog walking. If you know of people engaged in this activity, please encourage them to respect the fencing and explain to them that this area is particularly sensitive habitat for nesting and overwintering birds that domestic dogs can have a detrimental impact upon. The Department realizes that there is much more fence repair needed, and if you or someone you know would like to donate fence repair services (from a licensed fencing contractor) or funds toward additional fence repair please contact the Reserve manager at richard.brody@wildlife.ca.gov.



New Wetland Condition Assessment Report

The Bay Foundation recently released a study comparatively assessing wetland habitats across the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve using the California Rapid Assessment Method: "Condition Assessment of the Wetland Habitats in the Ballona

Wetlands Ecological Reserve, Los Angeles, CA." The surveys are part of a broader, regional, site-intensive assessment to determine the health and functioning of estuarine wetlands throughout the Southern California Bight, including degraded systems like Ballona. Summary findings show that Area A had the lowest final scores, followed by the seasonal wetland habitats of Area B. The highest scores occurred in the tidally-influenced portion of Area B. However, all Reserve wetland habitats had lower condition scores than statewide or regional reference locations.



(Top) Area B - tidally-influenced wetlands; (Bottom) Area A - seasonal wetlands

[Full Document \(PDF\)](#)

Updated Project Draft Alternatives

(<http://ballonarestoration.org/vision/>)

Since the Annenberg Foundation suspended its participation in the project, all of the project Alternatives are being revised. None of the Alternatives include a visitor education facility but many of the Alternatives include expanded and improved opportunities for the public to access the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve via trails and opportunities for environmental interpretation and education. Currently, the State does not have the resources to build and operate a visitor education center at the Reserve.



The four proposed alternatives are described in rough outline form [here](#), with additional details about each one on subsequent web pages (click the header title for each alternative). These proposed alternatives could be revised up until the public release of the draft EIR/EIS, and then again in the final EIR/EIS. The Project Management Team hopes to update this website accordingly.

Updated Draft EIR Project Schedule

(<http://ballonarestoration.org/project-schedule>)

August 2012

Initial Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation

August 16, 2012

Scoping Meeting

August - October 2012

Scoping Comment Period

January 2013

Revised Notice of Preparation (for a Visitor Education Center, which since has been withdrawn from the Project)

January - March 2013

Second Scoping Comment Period (for the now withdrawn Visitor Education Center)



Spring 2013 - Fall 2015

Prepare Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/EIR)

Spring - Winter 2015

Internal Agency Review & Revision of Administrative Draft EIS/EIR

Winter 2015

Release Draft EIS/EIR for Public Review

Spring 2016

Public Comment Period, including Public Comment Meeting on the Draft EIS/EIR (specific date TBD)

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