

Ballona Creek Renaissance...
dedicated to renewing Ballona Creek and its watershed for a healthier, more sustainable environment and community.

(We are also known as BCR)
www.ballonacreek.org

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CREEKSIDE NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

We're nearing completion of our grant-funded project to create a native plant garden on a 200-foot-long plot at Culver City Middle School next to the Ballona Creek bikepath. October saw the last two volunteer workdays, with a record turnout on October 9 of 48 volunteers, including 28 students.

The purpose of the project is to teach students about the value of California native plants, to provide service learning credit and to add to the Ballona Greenway. Our plants are all native to our local coastal sage scrub plant habitat. Once established, most will need no irrigation other than seasonal rain.

The project team (BCR boardmembers Jim and Cathi Lamm, Irene Reingold, June Walden and Amy Rosenstein) recruited students from Culver City Middle School and High School, helped them research and select plants, purchased the plants from local native plant nurseries, and organized volunteer work days



BCR volunteer David Valdez with one of our star performers, a white sage.

to plant them. Parents, community members and students from other schools also participated. Work days began with general instructions, followed by the hard labor. Our team installed a drip irrigation system to provide water until the plants are established and no longer need it. After the final planting, native plant seeds were broadcast over the area, to sprout as they normally would in the wild, then covered with mulch to reduce weeds and evaporation.

Many of the plants are also at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park. The white sage in the photo is a hardy

perennial with handsome whitish foliage, up to 3 feet high. Sage was important for native peoples for food, medicine, ceremonial purposes and daily uses, and considered sacred. Sage tea is still used to help reduce cold symptoms.

Our garden also includes more sages (black, hummingbird, and –yes- purple!), California Poppy, encelia (with its daisy-like yellow flowers), deer grass, yarrow, blue-eyed grass, California Fuchsia, buckwheat, and others.

Funds for this program were awarded by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation. Culver City Unified School District provided broad support in many ways. Local resident Mie Joness, who's also a landscape architect for L.A. County, helped guide some planting. City of Los Angeles Urban Forestry donated the mulch. Our volunteers were wonderful. And we get many compliments from passing cyclists!

BALLONA WETLANDS RESTORATION PROJECT

Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC), along with partner state agencies and community input, has begun an enormous long-term effort to restore the Ballona Wetlands to a much better-functioning wetlands.

Coastal wetlands provide wildlife habitat and play a crucial role in improving coastal water quality and reducing the harmful effects of floods and erosion on surrounding communities. More than 95% of Southern California's historic wetlands have been lost due to human development.

The Ballona Wetlands today

The Ballona Wetlands once occupied 2,000 acres in what is now Playa del Rey, Marina del Rey and Venice but have been reduced by surrounding development to only 600 acres.

They're now owned by the State of California and managed by the California Department of Fish and Game as an ecological reserve. The State Coastal Conservancy and the California State Lands Commission are participating partners in the planning and restoration of the wetlands.

The former wetlands consist of four main sections. Area A is the portion north of the creek and west of Lincoln Blvd; it was used to dump soil and silt when the Marina was excavated in the 1950s, so it remains a dry "uplands" area, no longer a wetlands. Area B, south of the creek and west of Lincoln Blvd, including areas south of Culver Blvd, is the area which most resembles the former wetlands, though less than 100 acres of it is actually a "muted" tidal wetland with partial tidal flow. Area C, more "uplands" north of the creek and west of Lincoln Blvd, is undeveloped except for some Little League ball fields. The Freshwater Marsh, created by Playa Vista at the southwest corner of Jefferson and Lincoln Blvds to filter mostly dry-weather runoff from nearby streets, has a thriving plant and bird habitat.

Why Restore the Ballona Wetlands?

More than a century of human neglect and abuse have left the Ballona Wetlands in a badly degraded state. Dredging during the construction of the Ballona Creek Flood Control Channel and later of Marina del Rey dumped excavated sand and soil on the wetlands and cut the connection between the wetlands and the ocean, except for a couple of small tide gates with limited flow from the creek. As a result, the area has lost many of the ecological functions of an estuary wetland and no longer supports many of the native species that once lived there. A better-functioning wetlands will give native species a

chance to recover and thrive. The Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project will return the daily ebb and flow of tidal waters, enhance freshwater interaction and support a more natural and healthy ecosystem. Creating suitable conditions will allow wetland vegetation to flourish, attract the insects, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds and mammals that call wetlands home and be a vital stopover for millions of migrating birds. It will also serve as an educational resource for the community.



The process.

A great deal of research is being done, of course. The State Coastal Conservancy, California State Lands Commission, Dept. of Fish and Game and consulting firms are coordinating the planning and environmental review of the project. There have been and will be more opportunities for community input during the environmental review process this fall.

Five alternatives proposing varying degrees of change were evaluated for feasibility. Alternative 5 is now preferred because it appears to be most capable of achieving project goals. Pictured on the facing page is an artist's conception, a drastic reconfiguration, turning Ballona Creek's straight path into a meandering one and breaching the levees to allow fresh water to flow in from upper Ballona Creek, and tidal influence to return from the ocean into both areas A and B. The bikepath would need to be re-routed; several options are being considered to provide better access upon completion of the restoration.

Major environmental groups generally support these approaches, while offering constructive suggestions. However, some environmentalists oppose what they



Alternative 5 (illustration courtesy of SMBRC)

call the “bulldozer” approach because it would destroy many current habitats created in recent decades. Some wish to preserve the higher, dry “uplands” of Area A for public trails. Some oppose mixing the polluted urban runoff in the creek with the wetlands, asking that only cleaner ocean waters be used to inundate the wetlands. Tough decisions lie ahead, but based on research.

Now underway is a baseline-monitoring program to collect physical, chemical, biological and human use data throughout the Ecological Reserve. Monitoring will enhance understanding of the existing conditions, and data collected will be used to help develop restoration and long-term monitoring plans. An expected rise in sea level due to global warming and ice-cap melting will be factored into the planning.

Meanwhile, plans for public trails in area A on at least a temporary basis are moving forward. Sean Bergquist, Director of Watershed Programs for SMBRC, says “We are hoping to finish designs and receive approval for the trails later this year, and do the needed improvements (gates, signs, etc.) next spring. The trails will be open soon after. The larger restoration project is beginning the environmental review. We will have a public scoping meeting at Loyola Marymount University, probably in November, where we will continue open dialogue and receive comments from the public.”

Malibu Lagoon. Up the coast a few miles, a restoration is also in the works for Malibu Lagoon, which suffers from pollution, poor circulation and physical configurations that limit wildlife. The California Coastal Commission

recently approved a \$7 million project on 12 acres of the lagoon starting next summer.

More info: There's a huge amount of information and downloadable files about the Ballona project on this website: <http://www.ballonarestoration.org/> , or contact Sean Bergquist at (310) 216-9899 or sbergquist@santamonicabay.org to learn even more and find out how you can get involved.

Free Public Ballona Wetlands Science and Research Symposium

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission will hold a free scientific symposium to highlight current monitoring and research being conducted at wetlands throughout the region. Presenters will include wetland scientists from throughout California. This event is open to the public and free.

When: Wednesday, December 8th, 2010,
8:30am - 5:30pm

Where: Loyola Marymount University
University Hall 1000
1 LMU Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045
(enter the campus from Lincoln Blvd between Manchester Blvd and Jefferson Blvd.)

RSVP to Karina Johnston:
kjohnston@santamonicabay.org or
Diana Hurlbert: dhurlbert@santamonicabay.org

BALLONA CREEK BIKEWAY PROJECTS

Overland Avenue Gateway and Trail

The City of Culver City has at last found funding for a nearly 1000-foot section of bikepath improvements from Overland Avenue west to the pedestrian bridge crossing the creek. We wrote about this project in our October, 2007 newsletter, but the economic downturn put it on hold. The total project cost of \$826,000 came from Federal sources (\$476,000) and from a State environmental grant (\$350,000).

Construction started in early October and is scheduled to finish in February. Because of the extensive work on the fencing, slope up to the school yard, bikepath and walking surfaces, and new gate, this section of the bikepath will be closed during construction, but users can get around it by crossing the creek to the south side, continuing on Ocean Drive and crossing back to the north side once past the construction zone.



Left: Looking east along the Culver City section being renovated between Overland Ave. and the pedestrian bridge, showing cracked blacktop, concrete-sprayed slopes, and giant weeds. Right: artist's conception of same section after renovation.



Left: Artist's drawing of new Overland Ave entrance gate.

MRCA Projects

The following projects in this article are the work of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, a local public agency (see website www.mrca.ca.gov/) which created the downstream entrance parks at Centinela Ave. (2005), and McConnell Ave., Inglewood Blvd. and Sepulveda Blvd. (all finished in 2009).

Duquesne Avenue Gateway

A new artist-designed gateway and native landscaping now enhance this narrow bikepath access ramp. Although there was no room for benches or drinking fountains, the very artistic

Duquesne Ave. Gateway (continued)

"Rivers of the World" mural, which we hope will be renovated next year, lies just inside the gate.



Duquesne Avenue Gateway

Culver City Park Gateway

The other newly installed gate is less often seen, located on a short, narrow trail from the Park Ranger headquarters at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook to the ball fields at Culver City Park. Both gates were created by Brett Goldstone, who also designed and built the Creek gates at Centinela Ave, McConnell Ave. and Inglewood Blvd.

Proposed Higuera Street Gateway

There's no bikepath exit between Duquesne Avenue and the last exit at Kronenthal Park, but MRCA, Culver City and the Baldwin Hills Conservancy are interested in creating one where Higuera Street crosses over the creek, just west of where Jefferson Blvd bends north (see map). An access ramp would facilitate bike access to the nearby Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (BHSO) State Park. There's already a bike stand in the visitor center parking lot at the top. Bear in mind, though, that Hetzler Rd. from Jefferson Blvd to the top is a 12% grade, so be in good shape if you plan to bike up.

A Higuera St. gateway would also promote bicycle commuting to and from the industrial and residential areas along Higuera St. It would create an oasis of new physical improvements in a long-neglected part of the bikepath and could foster other improvements nearby.

A third reason for a Higuera exit is safety. It's about 1½ miles from Duquesne to the next and last exit, a long way to go to escape if a bikepath user has a problem.

Since the bikepath is well below street level at that location, building a long access ramp such as the one at Duquesne Ave. would be required. Because of funding and construction challenges and the need for an environmental impact report and proper design for flood management, such a project could take several years.

Milton Street Park.

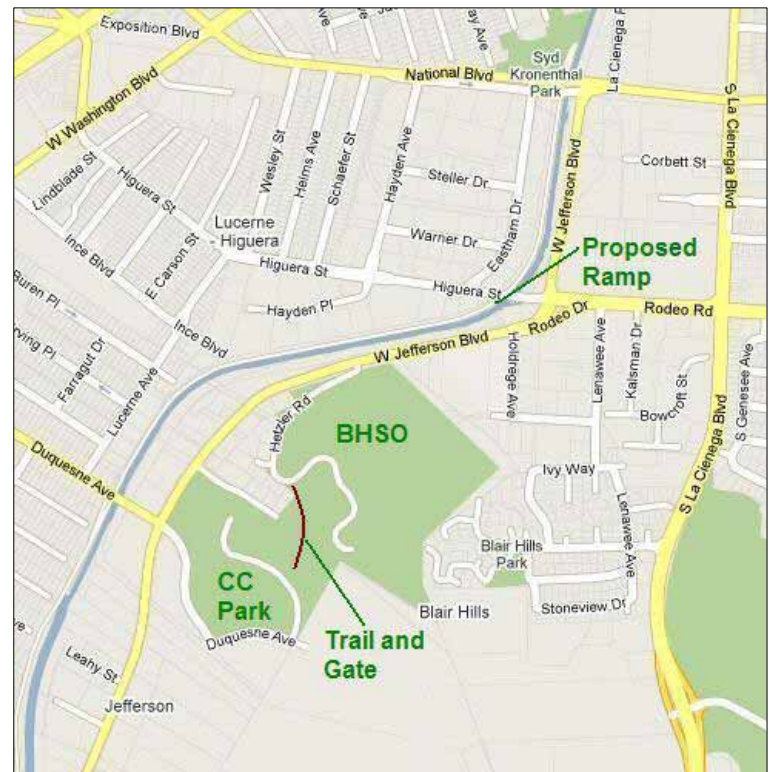
We presented an illustrated article about this creekside linear park in our January, 2009, newsletter, which can be obtained from our website. The location is just downstream from the Centinela Ave. entrance park. Says MRCA's Ana Petric, "Currently, the Milton project has most of its funding back. Construction documents are expected to be completed by December 2010. The project is only funded up to this point, so in 2011 we will have to look for funding to construct the park before we can move any further."

Additional Ballona Greenway Projects.

See the "Rain Gardens" article on page 10. The Restoration and Stewardship project at the Mar Vista Family Center at Slauson Avenue is on-going, as is the MRCA's project with the LA Conservation Corps' planting native landscaping from Inglewood Blvd. to Sawtelle Blvd.



Gate to Culver City Park ballfields from Scenic Overlook road



Map shows location of proposed Higuera St. access ramp and location of gate between Culver City Park and the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook.

Want to volunteer with BCR? Some ways to be involved are: staffing our booths at events, updating our website content, planning public programs, researching grant opportunities, planning fundraising events, and working with native plant gardens...and other ways according to your skills, interests, experience and available time. Contact Jim Lamm at (310) 839-6896 or email jim.lamm@ballonacreek.org.

MEET OUR ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS (an occasional feature)

Lori Escalera



Professional artist Lori Escalera joined BCR's Board of Directors in 1995, our first year of existence, and continues to be an irresistible force for getting things done. Her first major project for BCR was the 1997 "Postcards from Ballona" mural at the Overland Avenue entrance to the Ballona Creek bikepath, along with artists Lucy Blake-Elahi and Francois Bardol, a Culver City Middle School art

class, and community volunteers. A few years later, Lori created the "Rivers of the World" mural at the Duquesne Avenue entrance to the Creek, working with Lucy again, artist David Fairington and at-risk youth. Her next mural was "Day to Night" at Syd Kronenthal Park in Culver City, at the very end of the creek bikepath, working with Culver City High School students.

Lori now lives in Vista, in San Diego County, but continues to be involved with BCR. In 2009 she organized a group of volunteers to renovate the "Postcards" mural in 5 days (see our May 2009 issue). In September, 2010, Lori arranged an

event (see next page) to raise renovation funds for the "Rivers" mural, which we hope will be accomplished by early next year.

Lori has extensive training and project experience in both commercial and fine art, with many solo and group exhibitions, awards and honors. She has taught art and worked with youth in many public art projects. She is now regarded as one of the world's premier "Street Painters" or "Madonnari" (actually, it's done with chalk, not paint.) and has produced beautiful works at festivals in many cities both in the U.S. and abroad

For more information, visit her website at <http://www.thestreetpainter.com/> [Photos from Lori's website.]



It sure looks like a three-dimensional construction, but it's just a 2-D sidewalk chalk painting by Lori at one of the many public festivals.

Beyond the Beach Blanket

BCR sponsors a delightful talk by Marina Tidwell, also a member of our Advisory Council .

Discover the secret lives of coastal wildlife with Marina Tidwell, author and wildlife photographer. It seems like fiction, but it's not! You'll learn about the strange and fascinating world of coastal wildlife that teems just beyond the beach blanket in this fun and entertaining talk followed by a Q&A period. Also suitable for kids ages 8 up.

**Thursday, November 4, 2010 7 PM to 8:30 PM
Veteran's Memorial Building, Garden Room
4117 Overland Ave., Culver City
(southwest corner of Culver Blvd and Overland Ave.)**

Mural Restoration Fundraiser



A short section of the 212-foot “Rivers of the World” mural, depicting stylized representations of (L. to R.) the Amazon, the Ganges, the Yangtze, and the Nile Rivers. This section is painted, while sections further up the ramp are tile and mosaic and depict other major rivers. Stop by and enjoy the whole mural!

The BCR-sponsored “Rivers of the World” mural, along the Duquesne Ave. entrance to the Ballona Creek bike-path, was completed in 2000. Time, weather, overhanging foliage and passing bikepath users and maintenance vehicles have taken their toll on the 212-foot-long work. It’s time for a renovation, as was done last year for the “Postcards from Ballona” mural at Overland Avenue and the “Day to Night” mural in Kronenthal Park at the end of the bikepath.

With government finances decimated by the economic downturn, every penny of expense is a challenge. BCR has offered to pay half the estimated renovation cost and on September 12 staged a fascinating event to raise both funds and awareness of public art. The theme was public street art. Held at the Zakheim Art Conservation Studio location in Culver City, the event included live demonstrations of public art as chalk artists reproduced panels from a 14th century Italian work and “graff” artists rapidly created contemporary images with spray paint.

The artists also presented a discussion of their processes involved in public art. Attorney William Brutacao, who represented artist Kent Twitchell in a famous case involving the destruction of a mural he had painted, spoke about artists’ continuing rights in commissioned public works.

The event also aimed to increase interest in and knowledge of the many public murals in the greater Los Angeles area, which are constantly threatened with damage from normal wear and intentional graffiti. The Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles, with offices at the Zakheim Studios, works to increase public awareness and guardianship of these murals.

Thanks to the following businesses that donated food, beverages and materials: Artesa Winery (Napa, CA),



Artist Timoi de Leon describes her art in front of a spray-paint panel created quickly with fellow artist Steven Lopez as a demonstration.

Sorrento Italian Market, Trader Joe’s, Sprouts, Ralphs Markets, Noah’s Bagels, and Starbucks Coffee, Laird Plastics.

This newsletter is available as a print edition and an online document in PDF format (both in color). If you’re getting one version and prefer the other, let us know at secretary@ballonacreek.org and we’ll switch you. Note that in the online version, links are clickable.

THE NEVER-ENDING BATTLE IN THE CREEK

It's pollution. Sometimes you can see it, but often it's invisible. The consequences are real: birds and fish in the creek sicken and often die, and swimmers on beaches near storm drains develop skin rashes and intestinal ailments.



Some of the dead topsmelt at low tide in the May 2010 incident. (Photo by Rick Pine)

Three incidents in recent months highlight the problem. Sometimes the causes are truly accidental, such as the September 29 sewage spill due to a blockage in the sewer line near the intersection of Sepulveda Blvd and Centinela Avenue in the Fox Hills area of Culver City. 500,000 gallons of sewage spilled into the street and entered a nearby storm drain channel, Centinela Creek, which then drains into Ballona Creek about two miles downstream. This incident got the attention of the general public because two miles beaches were closed for two days as a precaution until testing determined that bacteria levels in the ocean near the drain were normal. Fortunately, fast action by officials trapped the sewage in the channel before much if any entered Ballona Creek.

But most pollution goes unnoticed by the public. And even when public agencies are aware of a problem, it's often impossible to discover the cause or source or to react in time to prevent consequences. Two incidents in May and August illustrate the on-going problems.

The Infamous Storm Drain. On May 3rd about 9 am, BCR boardmember Sandrine Cassidy Schmitt and commuter cyclist Rick Pine noticed hundreds of dead topsmelt (small fish) and one dead gull near the outlet of a particular drain a couple of hundred yards downstream

from the Marina Freeway overcrossing. It being low tide, the dead fish lying on the mud were obvious. Various birds were standing or flying around. Some were picking up the fish, others were wary. A shopping cart and plastic trash were nearby (not uncommon).

BCR called Friends of Ballona Wetlands to ask whom to notify; FBW contacted the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC), a state agency. By 2 PM, restoration ecologist Karina Johnston was on site collecting samples of water for lab analysis. Unfortunately, by that time, the tide had come in, removing some of the evidence. Test samples at the drain and two other nearby locations were analyzed for temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, acidity, bacteria, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), and 30 dissolved toxic metals such as cadmium, lithium and selenium. The data were somewhat inconclusive, but these facts (among others) have emerged:

- Results at the drain for nutrients were high, and dissolved oxygen was extremely low.
- High bacteria readings were found at the two nearby locations but *not* at the drain in question.
- Seven toxic metals exceeded government limits at the drain.
- The topsmelt die-off was not a one-time event, as passers-by have noticed such die-offs at this same drain from time to time over the years and either didn't report it (not knowing whom to contact) or didn't report it in time to collect samples.

Karina's conclusions: Topsmelt are very sensitive to changes in oxygen, so the low levels of dissolved oxygen in the storm drain and surrounding area may have caused the die-off. While the levels of metals exceeded government limits, it was not possible to determine their source or if they influenced the die-off.

Same place, new problem. In August, Rick Pine again noticed a problem with the same storm drain: the water in the drain was milky white. We have nothing more to report about this incident. (The editor once witnessed someone dumping white paint into a storm drain.)

Algae in the creek. Every summer, excessive algae growths can be seen upstream, in the Culver City

portion of the creek. These growths are caused by high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, which are plant nutrients. They could result in part by homeowners feeding their lawns and gardens and then overwatering them, so that nutrient-laden runoff enters storm drains and then the creek. The algae strips oxygen from the water, to the detriment of aquatic organisms downstream. Runoff may also carry insecticides and weed-killers. In addition to conserving water, this is another good reason to keep irrigation water on your lawn, not in the street.

Why doesn't someone monitor the creek waters and drains?

Actually, someone does. The City of Los Angeles monitors sites in the creek on behalf of itself, LA County and other cities within the watershed. There is one coordinated plan to monitor bacteria and a second plan for metals and other toxics. You can obtain extensive reports on these plans and where the monitoring sites are from the City of LA Stormwater Program website: www.lastormwater.org.

Specific links to the two documents are: www.lastormwater.org/Siteorg/program/TMDLs/BCBCMPfinaldraft.pdf (bacteria) and <http://www.lastormwater.org/Siteorg/program/TMDLs/Att1-BCfinalCMPrevison.pdf> (metals).

But there are only eight sampling sites for each plan. Samplings are weekly for the bacteria plan and only monthly for the metals and toxics plan. The purpose of the testing is to determine whether the water in the creek complies with federal Clean Water Act requirements. Hundreds of drains from tiny to huge enter the creek. Thus, the monitoring is unlikely to detect a random problem at any particular place in the creek, such as the "Infamous Drain". For more information, contact Huub Cox of the Watershed Protection Division at Hubertus.Cox@lacity.org or (213) 485-3984.

In addition to the monitoring performed by the City, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission also conducts water quality sampling in Ballona Creek at several locations below the 90 freeway overpass. They collect data on fecal indicator bacteria, nutrients, metals, and additional water quality parameters. For more informa-



Egrets, herons and other birds standing around another topsmelt die-off in March, 2009. The birds seem to realize something is wrong, and most of them are not eating the dead fish, a few of which are visible at the lower right. At the left edge of the frame is the edge of the "Infamous" drain that is suspected of pollution; in the upper left corner is the Marina Freeway, and at the upper center is the confluence with Centinela Creek. In the center is the inevitable shopping cart. (Photo by Rick Pine)

tion, contact Karina Johnston at kjohnston@santamonica.org.

Note that water testing is very expensive, and even if a problem is detected, finding the source of the pollution can be impossible. Sometimes it's one big polluter, but more often it's just a bunch of small sources.

Whom should I contact about a pollution event?

Lisa Fimiani of Friends of Ballona Wetlands has painstakingly compiled a thorough two-page resource list of hotline phone numbers for all sorts of environmental problems, which we've posted on BCR's website. To download it, go to www.ballonacreek.org/ and look for a blue information notice about hotline numbers at the top of the page. It's a downloadable PDF file. Two of the main numbers are:

- LA County Dept of Public Works Flood Control: (888) 253-2652 (888-CLEAN-LA), and
- City of LA Sanitation Stormwater Hotline: (800) 974-9794 - spills, abandoned waste

AROUND THE WATERSHED

Historic Photos on BCR Website

Thanks to the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, we are pleased to have on our website almost a hundred historic photos of Ballona Creek and the Venice-Marina-Playa del Rey areas, some dating as far back as the 1890s. Take a look: visit www.ballonacreek.org, place your pointer on “About the Creek” in the left column, and select “Historical Images” from the drop-down menu.

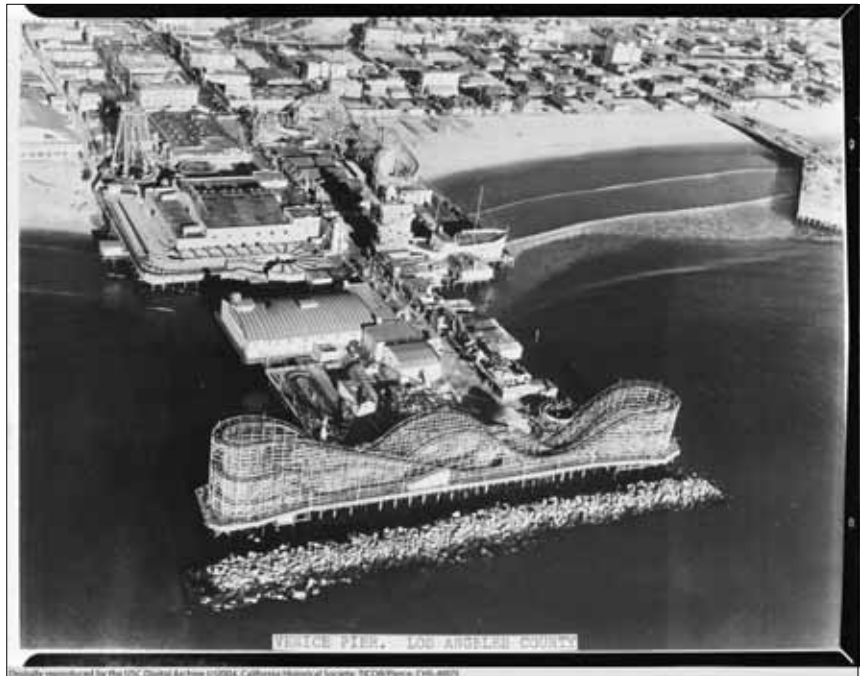
Instructions for viewing. You'll be presented with what appears to be 5 photos, but each photo is actually a gallery of more photos. Click on any of the images to see thumbnails of the individual photos in that gallery. Click on any of the individual photos to enlarge it. And at the top of the screen are controls for moving backward and forwards through the individual photos. You can also set them to play in slideshow mode (about 10 seconds per image) by clicking on a little control in the upper left corner of the window. And they can be enlarged to full screen. When you're in one gallery and wish to visit a different one, click on the word “Gallery” in the upper left corner of the window. Enjoy!

Rain Gardens Come to Ballona Creek.

What's a “rain garden?” It's a strip of landscaping which looks like a normal garden of plants and flowers but which has been engineered to absorb up to an inch of rain and allow it to percolate down through the soil and underlying material rather than running off into the streets and storm drains. The percolation retains pollutants and the cleaned water re-enters the water table.

This project will create such strips on both sides of a section of the creek in Culver City between the entrances at Duquesne and Overland Avenues. One strip will lie next to the bikepath between Jackson Avenue and Revere Place behind a residential area, the other will lie atop the bank directly across the creek behind an industrial area between Pearson and Leahy streets off Jefferson Blvd.

These gardens will capture, treat, and infiltrate a 1 inch of rain over 24 hours from 11 acres of land on each side of the creek. The industrial/commercial side will be 1000 ft long by average 20 ft wide and the residential side about 350 ft long by 25 ft average width. Maintenance will involve keeping the area free of non-native vegetation and changing the storm drain



Aerial view of Venice Pier, 1937 (photo courtesy of Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission.)

filters every 3 years. The underlying soils will not need replacement.

This demonstration project will create educational opportunities and restore a little natural habitat as well as keeping some pollution out of the creek.

The \$1.9 million cost is funded by Federal Stimulus Money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act being administered by the State Water Resources Control Board. The money was given directly to the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation. Culver City and LA County provided permitting, design review, and engineering.

Drain Covers

Los Angeles City is installing gratings over street drains to keep most trash and debris out of the storm drain system. Culver City is currently soliciting bids for a similar project. These “covers” can significantly reduce the number of Styrofoam cups you see in the creek, especially after a rain.

Emergency Phone Numbers

Thanks to Lisa Fimiani of Friends of Ballona Wetlands, BCR has posted her thorough list of emergency phone numbers for a wide variety of environmental and wildlife problems. For the complete list, visit our website at www.ballonacreek.org. The link to the list is near the top of the home page.

MVFC Youth Tour the Freshwater Marsh.

BCR president Jim Lamm snapped the photo below during a May 20 field trip to the Freshwater Marsh and Bluffs. The enjoyable and educational activity was part of BCR's work with Friends of Ballona Wetlands' Kelly Rose and Mar Vista Family Center youth on our creekside restoration project next to Slauson Avenue.



Vector Control in the Creek, Wetlands and Freshwater Marsh

Recently several people have expressed concern about the chemicals used to control mosquitoes and other insects in the creek, freshwater marsh, wetlands and other local bodies of water. Some chemicals are more potent than others, and some insects may annoy humans but are not dangerous in that they don't transmit diseases. They are a normal part of the food chain, eaten by many birds. The chemicals themselves not only harm birds and other aquatic animals but also cause rashes and adverse effects on people who come into contact with them (for example, workers cleaning the marsh).

Editor: Bobbi Gold

This newsletter reflects and celebrates the diversity of the people and activities of the watershed and beyond. La Ballona Creek Renaissance Program is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our Tax ID # is 95-4764614. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please mail contributions to Ballona Creek Renaissance, P.O. Box 843, Culver City, CA 90232. For address corrections, additions or deletions, please call (310) 837-3661 or email secretary@ballonacreek.org. Unattributed photos are the property of BCR.

Friends of Ballona Wetlands and marsh manager Dr. Edith Read sent a letter of comments about appropriate and inappropriate use of such pesticides to the State Water Resources Control Board. BCR has also sent a letter supporting the Friends' position.

Park Maintenance Volunteers

Interested in volunteering at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook? California State Parks Foundation (CSPF), a nonprofit organization, is seeking dedicated individuals to lead a new program at the park called Park Champions.

Over the past year, CSPF has sought ways to assist California State Parks in this difficult budget environment. In response to the \$14.2 million cut that State Parks is enduring, CSPF created a Park Champions Program to provide consistent, sustainable volunteer support in the area of park maintenance year-round.

Partnering with California State Parks and Volunteers for Outdoor California (V-O-Cal), CSPF has begun organizing volunteer projects in ten pilot park sites, including Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. Each site will have a group of committed core volunteers and crew leaders to facilitate project work days. These volunteers will receive valuable and unique training in project management, volunteer management and technical skills to fully prepare them for successful and rewarding projects. For volunteers who do not participate in training sessions, opportunities will be available in the form of individual tasks and group work days.

CSPF is currently recruiting volunteers for the program and will continue to expand its reach to other parks over the coming months. If you are interested in attending training to become a core volunteer or crew leader, please contact Melissa Brett, Program Coordinator, at 213-748-7458. For more information, please visit www.calparks.org/parkchampions.

We're Sorry!

We had problems with names in our April issue. We misspelled Laura Saltzman's name in the caption at the top of page 4, then inexplicably used Lori Escalera's previous name in the article at the top of page 5. (Well, that's who she was when she first joined BCR.) We'll try not to do that again (we'll make new mistakes).



P.O. Box 843 Culver City, CA 90232

Address correction requested

OCTOBER 2010 NEWSLETTER

BALLONA CREEK RENAISSANCE needs your help to renew the Westside's forgotten river and its watershed!

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$ other

I would like to volunteer my time I would like to join the board of directors/advisory council

I would like to donate goods, materials or services (such as office or storage space, computer or office equipment, food for special events, printing, etc.)

Other _____

Name/Title _____

Organization/Firm: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: ____/____/____ Fax: ____/____/____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to “Ballona Creek Renaissance”

Mail to: Ballona Creek Renaissance, PO Box 843, Culver City, CA 90232.