

**Ballona Creek Renaissance...**

A 501c(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to renewing Ballona Creek and its watershed for a healthier, more sustainable environment and community.

(We're also known as BCR)  
[www.ballonacreek.org](http://www.ballonacreek.org)

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**ANOTHER CREEKSIDE NATIVE PLANT RESTORATION!**

Ballona Creek Renaissance and two other local nonprofits, Friends of Ballona Wetlands (FBW) and the Mar Vista Family Center (MVFC), teamed up to create a native plant restoration area beside the Ballona Creek bikepath behind the new MVFC building, where Slauson Ave. ends at the creek. But it was more than just a creation; it was a hands-on learning experience for local youth that will continue for years to come.

On June 25, more than 100 plants were planted in a 90 ft. x 30 ft. plot by FBW, BCR, and staff and volunteers with MVFC's "By Youth for Youth" program, Joining in were high school student interns from the Youth Science Alliance under the direction of Dr. Richard Shope, who were preparing for ecological research and stewardship programs in three Ballona Creek Watershed communities.



Bringing the restoration to life began with breaking up the rock-hard dirt and preparing the ground. Youth from the L.A. Conservation Corps performed most of this heavy labor with a rototiller and pick axes.

Then volunteers planted and watered. Plants were obtained mostly from native plant nurseries Tree of Life in San Juan Capistrano (San Diego County) and Theodore Payne Nursery in Sun Valley (San Fernando Valley). Dr. Edith Read, manager of the Ballona Freshwater Marsh and an FBW board member, handled the plant acquisition. Brent Scheiwe from SEA Lab in Redondo Beach also provided some locally grown plants. Many native plants are dormant in summer and may seem dead but revive in winter rains and flourish in spring.

Funds for the project were provided by the Earth Island Institute on behalf of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project. Planning started (*continued...*)

three years ago, bringing youth leaders out into the Ballona Wetlands for educational tours and restoration projects. The project stretched out partly because of insurance and project maintenance required by Los Angeles County, which has jurisdiction over the creek. BCR's Jim Lamm and former FBW employee Kelly Rose shepherded the project through the County's permit process. BCR's Dino Parks helped with the grant application process, while FBW's Christian Alvez and MVFC's Lazaro Trinidad assisted with the education and training.



LA Conservation Corps workers.



Young volunteer

Other community leaders who contributed expertise to the event included Dr. Eric Strauss, Ecology Professor at Loyola Marymount University, and his students, and Cindy Hardin of LA Audubon. Holly Mitchell, 47<sup>th</sup> Assembly District member, also attended.

The Mar Vista Family Center's mission is to provide low-income

families with quality early-childhood education, youth enrichment, and educational tools. MVFC operates 21 projects in three areas: early childhood education, youth and community. Its youth programs benefit more than 600 children and teens.

The L.A. Conservation Corps provides opportunities for success to at-risk young adults and school-aged youth through job-skills training, education and work experience, emphasizing conservation and service projects benefitting the community.



(L to R) FBW Executive Director Lisa Fimiani, Assembly-member Holly Mitchell, and MVFC Director Lucia Diaz

For more information: contact BCR (see Page 1) and: Friends of Ballona Wetlands: [www.ballonafriends.org](http://www.ballonafriends.org)  
 Mar Vista Family Center: [www.marvistafc.org](http://www.marvistafc.org)  
 LA Conservation Corps/SEA lab: [www.lacorps.org/sealab.php](http://www.lacorps.org/sealab.php)  
 Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project: [www.sicwrp.org](http://www.sicwrp.org)

*(Information and photos provided by Lisa Fimiani, Executive Director of Friends of Ballona Wetlands)*

**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 [editor@ballonacreek.org](mailto:editor@ballonacreek.org) and we'll switch you. Note that in the online version, the blue links are clickable.

Our October 2010 issue presented a brief overview of the Ballona Wetlands restoration plan proposed by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. Their preferred plan, known as “Alternative 5” is an extensive phased renovation, opening the western 1½ miles of Ballona Creek into wetlands on both sides. Some environmental groups oppose it. BCR has not yet taken a position, but in the interests of balanced reporting, we here present the views of two other wetlands advocates: Walter Lamb, a board member of Ballona Wetlands Land Trust, and Rex Frankel, Director, Ballona Ecosystem Education Project. Their perspectives differ from each other as well as from SMBRC.

Environmental studies and public input are continuing, and the bulldozers are not coming Monday. The process requires evaluating a range

of possible projects, including doing nothing. We urge you to read these statements in full to try to understand their perspectives. Note that a court recently put on hold a significant renovation of Malibu Lagoon due to similar concerns.



## Walter Lamb's Statement:

The Ballona Wetlands ecosystem is a local ecological treasure that was very nearly lost to an ill-advised, oversized development. The tireless commitment of a coalition of wetlands advocates, who were criticized for being unrealistic at the time, led to the preservation of 600 acres of critical habitat. While this is just a fraction of the original ecosystem it is still a far larger area than many thought could be spared from bulldozers and concrete. While acquisition efforts continue, discussion has largely shifted to the topic of how best to restore the protected acres to their fullest ecological potential. The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC) has outlined five possible restoration alternatives ranging from a minimalist approach, with an estimated cost of about \$6 million, to a massive reengineering of the entire ecosystem, with an estimated price tag of over \$200 million.

Officially named Alternative 5, but sometimes referred to as the “bulldozer” approach, the \$200 million solution is the one currently endorsed by SMBRC, but it raises some legitimate concerns from many of those who were instrumental in preserving this land in the first place. Just as with medical procedures, there is a sense that invasive ecological re-engineering should

be undertaken only when less-invasive procedures are exhausted and shown to be inadequate. A less-invasive approach would be less expensive and less risky and would not preclude a more-invasive approach later on. That is not the case in reverse.

While the committee still selected Alternative 5 as one of two proposals that deserved further consideration, based on its potential benefits, it is not surprising that long time advocates of the wetlands would be hesitant to risk permanently altering what is there now without greater assurances of an ecologically superior outcome and a better explanation of why less invasive options are inadequate.

All of the various options have pros and cons associated with them. How those pros and cons are weighted is what can lead to honest disagreement about which option is best for the ecosystem. What is the value of a species that might benefit from a certain option relative to one that might be negatively affected by it? What is the value of clean water in the bay relative to the value of upland habitat? More upfront discussion of such decision criteria will help all stakeholders better understand the ramifications of each alternative.

Diversity of opinion is a good thing and even within the coalition of groups resisting Alternative 5 there are differ-



Tidal channels and old Pacific Railway structure in area B. (Photo by Jim Everett)

ing views on exactly what should be done instead. As such, the groups have agreed on a core set of seven guiding principles to help the SMBRC better understand the positive values that these groups can all rally behind. In summary, they are: 1) incremental, community involved ecosystem rejuvenation; 2) appreciation of existing ecosystem; 3) focus on continued acquisition; 4) utilize existing access points; 5) utilize existing infrastructure (e.g. the old Pacific Railway bridge supports to create linkage between ecosystem fragments); 6) move all power, telephone, and cable lines underground, and remove the majority of street lighting; and 7) prioritize protection for endangered, threatened, and imperiled species.

There is also some concern about the role of money and politics in the decision making process. As is often the case with highly polarized, emotionally charged issues, these concerns have often been expressed in regrettable ways. Concerned stakeholders can legitimately seek a more transparent process without anyone having to feel that their integrity has been impugned. With \$200 million dollars in public funds at stake, it is naïve to think that there are no external pressures on the process. By making an extra effort at transparency, the SMBRC can help assure stakeholders that the final plan will ultimately be the best one for the whole ecosystem and those who treasure

it, without any regard for who gets a government contract or which politician gets a ribbon-cutting ceremony photo op.

All of us want to get this right, so it is worth erring on the side of too much public discussion than not enough. While SMBRC's project website ([www.ballonarestoration.org](http://www.ballonarestoration.org)) has quite a bit of valuable information, the site could do much more in the way of informing visitors of different perspectives, rather than simply seeking to persuade visitors to adopt one specific perspective. To their credit, the SMBRC has responded to public feedback by implementing a comprehensive volunteer monitoring project to better understand the existing ecology. It is important that this project, and the data it yields, not be viewed as simply "checking the box" but rather as a real opportunity to further the discussion.

All stakeholders owe it to the wetlands to keep an open mind, and not get so locked into one vision that we filter out important information that might change our perspective. With civil and thoughtful discussion within a transparent process, we can all be more confident that this vital ecosystem will get the best care and nurturing that we can give it.

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## Rex Frankel's Statement

Thirty years ago, a developer called Playa Vista launched a plan that would have paved over 90% of the last pristine marsh and hiking spot in the midst of urbanized west Los Angeles, the Ballona ecosystem. We pushed back and ultimately saved 70% of it. We were not willing to settle for any of our wetlands being developed. But we were also not willing to sacrifice the rest of the wildlife habitat, called uplands, which contained wildflowers, trails, and the dryland nesting areas for the critters that lived in the wetlands. Thus, after a deal was hatched in 1989 to save 1/3rd of the Playa Vista site, some thought this was enough, as the developer was saving the wettest of the wetlands. We continued the fight, braving sometimes very personal attacks and a lawsuit by those who were now friends of the developer. We saved the rest of this natural area in 2003 with \$140 million in State bond money.

While we who saved the Ballona uplands and the additional wetlands supported restoration plans ranging in cost to taxpayers from \$6 to \$60 million, the State's managers told us that instead they wanted a super-expensive \$209 million plan that would completely change the Ballona that so many of us have known and loved for so long. Their plan would remove the levees along the creek, remove most of the trails and dredge out the land to be essentially an arm of the ocean. Their massive and damaging plan, called Alternative 5, would convert most of the upland habitat into wetlands, changing a balanced ecosystem into a mono-culture.

But wetlands need uplands. You've got to have a place for critters to hunt: the wetlands. You've got to have a place for them to build their nests: those are the uplands. Ballona is an ecosystem, not a mono-culture. We need both habitats. *(continued)*



Two views of uplands and wetlands. Left: area A ponds (photo by Kathy Knight). Right: one of the two tidal channels in area B, shown at mid-tide; at low tide, it's almost all mud. (photo: Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission).

Management of the project has been handed to the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC). I have posted extensive critiques of the state's plans and 4 slide presentations at our website, <http://saveallofballona.org> and here: <http://lacreekfreak.wordpress.com/2011/05/12/a-balloneous-funk/#comments>

Ballona Creek is heavily polluted and a cleanup is many years off in the future and likely to cost \$3 billion or more, and will require the purchase of around 4 times as much acreage as the Ballona Wetlands upstream to serve as natural filters for all that pollution. That land is now developed and removing urban development and homes to clean up water pollution, in order to then funnel that water into the Ballona Wetlands, is an extremely long-term and controversial and expensive project. That's why I believe tying the wetlands restoration to the success of the upstream stormwater pollution cleanup is foolhardy.

The good news is that since 2008, the SMBRC managers have backed off somewhat, in that a 70 acre parcel east of Lincoln Blvd. is not slated for dredging. However, their plans still contain extensive dredging of virtually everything west of Lincoln Blvd., which is over 80% of the Ballona preserve. And while they now say they will preserve the existing habitat mix, with half of a restored Ballona as uplands, their plans still involve bulldozing those uplands. Uplands can be restored by pulling out weeds. Massive earthmoving is completely unnecessary unless your plan is really to convert the uplands into wetlands, which has been their stated preference for some time. Thus, a plan that saves uplands and yet bulldozes them still arouses a great deal of suspicion as to the true purposes behind the plan. Finally, why spend millions to bulldoze saved land while bulldozers still threaten other nearby smaller open spaces and our government says it has no money to save them? \$200 million is more than the state paid for the entire Ballona Wetlands in 2003.

So, that's what we don't like. Here is what I do like:

Personally, I would support breaching the south levee of Ballona Creek to bring more water into the current wetland areas from an area close to the ocean, so it is less likely to be contaminated with polluted urban runoff. I differ with some of my Ballona allies on that point. I think that some small amount of bulldozing is necessary to dig small channels. That is a lot different, though, than SMBRC's favored massive bulldozing scheme.

On the other hand, there is no justification to remove the north levee, as that would only be for the purpose of habitat conversion, turning the uplands into wetlands. As the uplands are a vital part of the web of nature, we need to leave that north levee alone.

This is why I advocate that the SMBRC split the Ballona restoration plan into two pieces: a south wetlands restoration and a north uplands restoration. This makes it possible to pursue the less-controversial work of repairing the actual (south) wetlands without the long legal battles over bulldozing the uplands (which would be a separate project).

I'd like to see some more water in the actual wetlands soon. We can start on that now if SMBRC backs off on pushing a highly controversial plan that, due to its tie to the upstream runoff cleanup plans, may not occur in our lifetimes.

We need to protect our existing trails and existing functioning habitat and we need bridges for hikers and bikes to cross Ballona Creek. We need to think really hard before ripping stuff out. We cannot afford, nor do we need, an extremely expensive industrial scale bulldozing plan at Ballona. ●

## A BAD SUMMER FOR THE CREEK

### The “Infamous Drain” Becomes More Infamous

Our October 2010 newsletter described problems of pollution entering the creek, especially from one particular drain nicknamed “The Infamous Drain”. It enters the creek from the north bank somewhat downstream of the merge with Centinela Creek, about halfway between the Marina (90) Freeway and Lincoln Blvd. Its problems were chronicled by Rick Pine, who bikes to work along the creek and brings his camera.

Last year’s problems at this drain included many small dead fish, known as topsmelt, and some milky white substances. Karina Johnston of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission took water samples to analyze and found no evidence of toxic substances but noted that the dissolved oxygen in the water was extremely low.

This summer, the problems worsened considerably, and again Rick Pine brought them to the attention of environmental organizations and public agencies.

The odors emanating from that drain, and also a few other drains which enter the creek nearby, became a terrible stench, not only at the creek but inland along the route that the drains take to the creek. Homeowners and businesses complained as the odors escaped from storm drain openings.

The first response by LA County Public Works was to put a rubber curtain over the mouth of the drain to suppress the odor. However, observers noted that swallows were nesting inside that storm drain, and laws prohibit interfering with them during nesting season. Further investigation revealed a large amount of decomposing organic matter in the drain, perhaps a couple of feet thick and perhaps hundreds of feet into the drain. Public Works trucks and employees worked for several days to vacuum and shovel out the muck.

At this time, it appears that the drain configuration may have been at least partly at fault. The bottom of the drain itself is lower than the creek bed at its junction. When the tide goes out and the creek bed is just mud, some water remains in the drain and many small fish may be trapped. The fish may use up all the dissolved oxygen in the water and die before high tide returns and they can escape. No toxic substances were found.

### Sudden Mallard Deaths

As the drain odor problem was resolved, the creek and other nearby waters were hit with an onslaught of bird deaths. 174 birds, mostly ducks, plus uncounted others were found dead or sick in Ballona Creek, Del Rey Lagoon, the Freshwater Marsh, and Ballona Lagoon and Venice Canals north of the Marina channel.



Left: two afflicted birds, one dead and one alive but ill. Above, a volunteer and a CA Dept of Fish and Game agent capture a sick bird for treatment at the International Bird Rescue and Research Center. Photos courtesy of Lisa Fimiani of Friends of Ballona Wetlands.

The California Dept. of Fish and Game investigated the illness and diagnosed a form of avian botulism. A toxin produced by a bacteria affects the nervous system, resulting in muscle paralysis. It's highly contagious but treatable. According to Lara Meeker of Santa Monica Baykeeper, outbreaks usually occur in summer in high temperatures in shallow water with low dissolved oxygen and some kind of decomposing organic matter that becomes a food source for the bacteria. Botulism occurs

naturally from time to time. While the Infamous Drain may have provided the right conditions for the botulism to flourish, it may not have been a direct cause. On Sept. 20, an outbreak of botulism and dead ducks was reported in Lake Forest (Orange County).

Some mildly sick birds were taken to the International Bird Rescue Research Center in San Pedro for treatment. Fourteen ducks recovered and were released.

## BALLONA CREEK RENAISSANCE PARTICIPATES IN CREEK CLEANUPS

BCR has participated in three cleanups this year. Partnering with Friends of Ballona Wetlands in April and July, BCR's David Valdez and Sandrine Cassidy Schmitt set up our wetlands booth with information and refreshments. Then on Coastal Cleanup Day, September 17, David, Jim and Cathi Lamm, Lucy Edward, Amy Rosenstein, Michelle Weiner, and Heal the Bay Associate Director Alix Hobbs staffed our creek cleanup station at the Overland Ave bikepath entrance. Both David and Sandrine brought family members to help clean up, and Karly Katona, deputy to County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, stopped by. Culver City provided essential support such as tools, supplies and trash pickup.

Our booths present educational information about the creek and what we're doing to improve it in terms of environment, habitat, education, recreation and appearance. These cleanups enable youngsters to learn about taking care of our environment and enable students to earn service learning credits. Our next cleanup will be Saturday, November 5, at the Centinela Avenue entrance to the creek. See Page 1 for our contact info.



David Valdez explains about watersheds to a wetlands cleanup volunteer in April.



David Valdez and Lucy Edward at our Coastal Cleanup Day table on September 17, providing information, tools and supplies, and refreshments for volunteers.



Volunteers dump trash they've collected from the creek and its banks.

## OMG! ALGAE!!!

Every summer algae grows in the creek, in Del Rey Lagoon, and other shallow streams. Is it good, bad or irrelevant to the health of our waters?

In general, algae overgrows in bodies of water when there are excess nutrients, primarily phosphorus and nitrogen. These nutrients can come from runoff containing fertilizers from parks, golf courses or suburban lawns; untreated sewage, and burning of fossil fuels, among common sources. Laundry detergents were a major source of phosphorus until it was banned decades ago (which is why detergent isn't as reassuringly sudsy as it used to be).

Algae come in many forms, from single-celled organisms to seaweed and giant kelp. Different kinds of algae have different effects, good or bad.

Some birds, especially ducks, eat algae. According to Dr. Edith Read, manager of the Freshwater Marsh at Lincoln and Jefferson Blvds, beds of algae can support extensive invertebrate fauna (the snails and other aquatic animals that the birds eat). Cattails in the marsh take up many of the nutrients that feed algae, so that the algae doesn't become excessive. However, "blooms" of algae grow upstream in Ballona Creek and in Del Rey Lagoon (see photos).

A negative consequence of excessive algae is that it depletes the water of dissolved oxygen needed for survival by downstream fish and mud-dwelling invertebrates. This process of excessive aquatic plant growth causing reduced oxygen is called "eutrophication." Some algae also produce toxins like domoic acid which can kill birds and marine mammals, including seals, sea lions and dolphins.

A KCET television program earlier this year depicted the tragedy of Lake Champlain in northern New York, Vermont and Quebec, devastated by algae due to runoff from farms in Vermont. The program reported that a dog died as a result of swimming in the lake, showing how toxic algae pollution can become. (There are no farms in the Ballona Creek watershed.)

Karina Johnston of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission reports that Ballona is one of the locations monitored by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP). This project has conducted eutrophication studies at the Ballona Wetlands and the Ballona Lagoon for many years as part of a regional monitoring program. Their next report is due out around June 2012. (We'll watch for it.)



The following online article contains more information:  
<http://www.eoearth.org/article/Eutrophication>.

**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, 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](mailto:jim.lamm@ballonacreek.org) .

Fiji Ditch is yet another little ecological niche in the Ballona Wetlands/Uplands.

On the map on page 3, you may be able to see a thin black line close to the northwest edge of Area A, just below Fiji Way road. That's the Fiji Ditch. It connects to the Marina waters underneath Dock 52 and Fiji Way, then runs east next to Fiji Way, passing underneath Lincoln Blvd into Area C. There it runs over a cement levee and eventually enters a storm drain. Because of trees and shrubbery, it's not easily seen from the road.

When the County excavated the Marina in the '50s-'60s, water-saturated soil was dumped on area A. The ditch was dug to allow water to flow back into the marina.

According to Karina Johnston, restoration ecologist with the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, the portion of the ditch west of Lincoln Blvd has tidal flow. Some of the fish in it are the same ones found in the salt marsh of Area B, but the ditch also has non-native species such as mosquitofish. The round stingray can be found there during specific tides and seasons – they swim in with the incoming tide to feed on invertebrates in the sediment, and then swim back out with the outgoing tide. Black-crowned night herons also hang around the ditch to fish.

Fiji Ditch is part of the area being studied for restoration, to make it wider and reduce the slopes of the banks to create better salt marsh habitat.

Karina and other SMBRC staff sample the ditch flora and fauna. Karina supplied these photos of their ditch diving, courtesy of SMBRC.



Fiji Ditch looking East. Fiji Way is hidden behind the trees and shrubs on the left.



Night fishing: Karina Johnston looks for nocturnal species



Round stingrays captured in the Fiji Ditch

## AROUND THE WATERSHED

### Rain Gardens at Jackson Avenue

Our October 2011 issue described a “rain garden” demonstration project being constructed by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission on both sides of Ballona Creek between the Duquesne Ave and Overland Avenue entrances. The structures, finished this summer, capture stormwater runoff from adjacent streets and properties, run it through a bank of soil and plants to remove pollutants such as oil and grease then infiltrate the water back into the ground, keeping pollutants out of the creek. This photo shows the rain garden on the bikepath side of the creek. (The garden on the opposite side of the creek, adjacent to an industrial area, is larger and longer.) An interpretive sign explains the purpose of this project and helps educate passersby about this method of cleaning stormwater runoff



### Westwood-Expo Botanical Garden

The City of Los Angeles Watershed Protection Division has produced a concept design for a “water garden” next to the future Westwood Station of the Expo Light Rail line, on LA City-owned land along Exposition Blvd. between Westwood Blvd and Overland Ave.

This demonstration project will provide treatment of urban runoff, green space, access to public transit, and educational opportunities. It will divert dry weather flow from the Overland Ave. drain into a specially constructed swale (see photo illustration) to capture runoff from 2,400 acres of drainage area to the north. During rains, it will also capture stormwater runoff from 3-5 acres of residential streets. Diverted dry-weather flow will be lifted to a diversion stream on the north side of the Station for physical and biological treatment by flowing through various plant communities, soil medium, and exposure to ultraviolet light. The cleaned water could be used for onsite irrigation, with excess water returned to the original drain, which flows to Ballona Creek.

Plants selected for the swale will be natives capable of absorbing and surviving contaminants in the water. A water-tight membrane beneath the water garden soil will prevent water from infiltrating deeply into the soil (unlike the Rain Gardens at Jackson Avenue, above) to avoid interfering with the adjacent rail structures. Soil conditions, plant density, and effluent water quality will be monitored periodically to make sure that pollutant removal is optimal.



This garden will educate station visitors and students at nearby schools. It will also help meet the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act by removing pollutants from some water headed to Ballona Creek and Santa Monica Bay.

The project was developed through discussions with local residents and the Westwood Gardens Homeowners Association as well as various public agencies. Estimated cost is \$2.20 million. In July 2011, the City applied for Prop 84 Grant -Statewide Park Program for project funding. For more information, contact Ryan Thiha at [ryan.thiha@lacity.org](mailto:ryan.thiha@lacity.org).

By themselves, such demonstration projects won't completely solve our water quality problems, but they help make people aware of the issues. Some property owners can make physical changes to their lawns and parking areas to achieve such goals on an individual basis, such as the project on the next page.

## A Water-Saving Home Garden

The yard of a Culver City home was transformed from a wasteful ordinary grass lawn, where rain and irrigation ran off into the street, into a drought-tolerant garden that captures rain in a contoured swale. The project, by Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and the City of



Culver City, added rain gutters and downspouts to the roof and three large rain barrels at the side of the home to capture rain for later use. The yard was dug up and reshaped, with better soil, attractive rocks, native plants and a swale to absorb water. To learn more about rain barrel programs and rain gardens, visit [Santamonicabay.org](http://Santamonicabay.org) and click on the rain garden links.

## Ballona Creek Greenway Plan Wins Award

The Ballona Creek Greenway Plan, described in our April 2011 issue, has won the 2011 Westside Urban Design Award for best Plan. The Greenway Plan is the result of collaboration between the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. 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> and clicking on the link at the bottom of the page.

**Phone number to report toxic spills  
anywhere in LA County:  
1-800-675-HELP (staffed 24/7)**

### DrainWatch

**Were you appalled by the article on page 6 about pollution in the creek? Perhaps you can help by participating in DrainWatch, a volunteer program by Santa Monica Baykeeper to take samples of water from drains emptying into Ballona Creek (and other locations), to be tested for various contaminants.**

**Details are available on the website [www.smbaykeeper.org/drainwatch.html](http://www.smbaykeeper.org/drainwatch.html). For more information, contact Lara Meeker at [lara@smbaykeeper.org](mailto:lara@smbaykeeper.org) or 310.395.6162 ext.101**

**Training sessions are offered periodically. The next one is scheduled for Oct. 17th from 6:30-8:30pm at Baykeeper's office, 120 Broadway Suite 105, Santa Monica, CA 90401.**

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 [editor@ballonacreek.org](mailto:editor@ballonacreek.org). Unattributed photos are the property of BCR.



P.O. Box 843 Culver City, CA 90232

Address correction requested

## FALL 2011 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

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my entire contribution to benefit BCR's programs, **OR**

I'd like a T-shirt for my donation of \$50 or more (circle size: S M L ), **OR**

I'd like a tote bag for my donation of \$50 or more

Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make your donation payable to "Ballona Creek Renaissance"**

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