



Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project Overview

The Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve is a 577-acre protected area on the ancestral lands of the Gabrielino-Tongva, now owned and managed by the State of California. The project will restore, enhance, and create coastal wetland habitat and re-establish natural processes and functions. It will improve habitat for native wildlife and create public access amenities for recreation and education..

Project Timeline:

- 2003: The highly degraded land was purchased by the state with the intention of restoration
- 2005: The Ballona Wetlands were designated an Ecological Reserve
- 2017: Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) outlining long-term restoration plans (w/ four project alternatives) released
- 2019: Final EIR (with response to comments) released
- 2020: CDFW issued certification and selected Alternative 1
- 18-24 months after certification: US Army Corps will finalize the engineering plans
- 2023-2025: Projected Start Date

Why Does Ballona Need Restoration?

- Ballona's health is extremely poor; the wetlands were saved from development, but not restored
- The construction of Marina Del Rey permanently destroyed nearly half of the Ballona Wetlands & dumped 3.1 million cubic yards of fill on the rest, piled 15-20 feet high in some places
- A majority of the wetlands are not wet because they are disconnected from Ballona Creek
- A serious weed epidemic has degraded more than 70% of this protected area

What Will Restoration Do?

- Undo over a century of damage to Los Angeles' last coastal wetland; 91% of this habitat has been lost in CA
- Remove dumped fill from Marina del Rey's construction to create a more natural elevation gradient
- Remove cement levees along Ballona Creek and replace with earthen levees that will allow the creek to flow freely through the wetlands, reuniting the creek with its historic floodplain while maintaining flood capacity
- Remove invasive weeds that blanket the area and replace with native wetland and upland plants
- Create a system of pedestrian and bike trails for recreational and educational use

What are the Benefits of Restoration?

- Repair damaged habitats and improve biodiversity
 - Ballona has suffered from farming, ranching, oil drilling, filling, pollution, invasive plants, channelization, and other human impacts over the last 100+ years
 - The project will restore biodiversity by bringing back plants and animals that previously called Ballona home and improving habitat for the endangered and special status species that are hanging on
 - A thriving Ballona Wetlands will also attract new species that have lost their habitat elsewhere in CA
- Reconnect the land and the sea
 - Ballona is an estuary, a rare place where the mouth of a river meets the ocean, but because of channelization and the fill from Marina del Rey, most of the land is disconnected from the creek and tides
 - Restoration will "re-wet" the wetlands, improve water quality, and provide storm surge protection
 - Habitat for fish and other aquatic species will be enhanced, improving the base of the food chain for countless species and creating nurseries for fish
- Make Ballona climate-resilient
 - The project will insure Ballona is adaptable in the face of climate change
 - Earthen levees will allow for the wetlands to migrate, making sure this habitat is not permanently flooded and turned into a stagnant pond
 - Properly functioning wetlands are the first line of defense against sea level rise; a restored Ballona Wetlands will ease the flood risk on neighboring communities
 - Healthy wetlands are carbon sinks; restoration will allow Ballona to capture Blue Carbon
- Remove SoCalGas from the Ballona Wetlands
 - As part of the plan, SoCalGas will permanently abandon all 16 wells from within the boundaries of the Reserve
 - Accompanying roads and infrastructure will be removed and restored to native habitat
- Make Ballona accessible to ALL Angelenos
 - Restoration will create exceptional wildlife viewing, with recreational and educational opportunities for communities that have very little access to the outdoors
 - The project will add 3.6 miles of bike/pedestrian paths, 5.5 miles of pedestrian only paths including 2,000 feet of boardwalk, 2 new bridges to safely cross Lincoln Blvd, educational signage, and parking facilities
 - Newly constructed trails will create accessibility for all community members, eliminating current obstacles