BALLONA RESTORATION FACTS

1984
Friends of Ballona wetlands sued the Coastal Commission for its decision to approve Howard Hughes's Summa Corporation plan to develop the wetlands.

2003
The State acquired the remaining wetlands, protecting them permanently. Since then, a coalition of major environmental groups including the Friends, Heal the Bay, Los Angeles Waterkeeper, the Bay Foundation, and Surfrider Foundation have worked tirelessly to get the State to restore Ballona.

2017
Restoration Plans were released in a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) by CA Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Army Corps of Engineers, the lead agencies for the planning, implementation, and management of the restoration.

Now
The agencies are reviewing thousands of public comments about the DEIR as they develop the final restoration plan. Our coalition will hold the agencies accountable for the sensitive restoration they promised.

Why Ballona Needs 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 1/2 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.

State of CA’s Restoration Goals
- Restore, enhance, and create coastal wetland habitat and establish natural processes and functions
- Enhance use by native wildlife
- Create public access for recreation and educational activities

Essentially, restoration will remove weeds and excess sediment, reunite Ballona Creek with the wetlands, expand habitat and native plant cover to benefit wildlife, and create a system of pedestrian and bike trails for visitors to enjoy.

Restoration Works!
Successful restorations have taken place all over the world and in our own backyard, providing benefits like greater flood protection and cleaner water and air.

The restored Ballona Freshwater Marsh, formerly a celery field, now supports 35 different nesting bird species.

The sand dunes in the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve, previously covered with invasive ice plant, now support a population of federally endangered El Segundo Blue Butterflies.
Why Bulldozers are Needed

- Most of the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve is dry, and wetlands need water to exist and thrive.
- All three alternatives proposed in the DEIR include reconnecting the wetlands to its water source, Ballona Creek, & removing excess fill that was dumped during the construction of Marina Del Rey.
- Machinery was used to destroy the wetlands, so it would be impossible to restore them without machinery.
- Sediment removal will be done in a careful and well-planned manner.

Animal Safety

- Some common LA animals, such as rabbits, lizards and gophers, may be displaced.
- Before restoration, they will be relocated to safer areas.
- Work will proceed cautiously, restoring small areas, one at a time, & will be strictly monitored.
- Typically a biologist is assigned to every piece of equipment to ensure that no animals are in its way and if there are, that work is stopped to relocate them safely.
- No rare or endangered animals will be harmed and their habitats will be expanded & improved by this restoration project.

Which Animals Will Benefit

- Wetland-dependent species with no where else to go will benefit.
- The threatened Belding’s Savannah Sparrow currently nests at Ballona, and the endangered Ridgeway’s Rail could nest there. Both have lost 90% of their habitat & desperately need this area to be restored.
- Other sensitive wetland species that will benefit from restoration include the Southern California salt marsh shrew, South Coast marsh Vole, Wandering Skipper Butterfly, Western Meadowlark, Loggerhead Shrike, intertidal invertebrates (an important food source), and many others.
- The endangered California least tern may benefit from additional food resources and the fish of Santa Monica Bay depend on the sheltered wetlands to lay their eggs.

How to Stay Informed with the FACTS

We support science-based restoration and sharing fact-supported information.

To learn more, go to:

- ballonarestoration.org
- wetlandsrestoration.org
- ballonafriends.org
- healthebay.org
- lawaterkeeper.org
- surfrider.org

Sign-up for our emails to receive the latest information.