



# bay restoration commission

STEWARDS OF SANTA MONICA BAY

santa monica bay restoration commission ✂ 320 west 4<sup>th</sup> street, ste 200; los angeles, california 90013  
213/576-6615 phone ✂ 213/576-6646 fax ✂ www.smbrc.ca.gov

December 8, 2011

Agenda Item #3b

To: Governing Board, SMBRC  
From: Shelley Luce, Executive Director  
Subject: Watershed Advisory Council Appointments

## Action Requested of the Governing Board:

- Consider appointment of two entities to the Watershed Advisory Council

## **Background**

The Watershed Advisory Council (WAC) is the broad stakeholder body of the SMBRC. The primary responsibility of the Watershed Advisory Council is to advise the Governing Board on Bay restoration priorities for funding, planning, project implementation, monitoring and further research.

The SMBRC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU, as amended October 20, 2011) authorizes the Governing Board to appoint additional, interested entities to the WAC if the entities meet the following criteria:

***Watershed Advisory Council Eligibility Criteria.*** Existing and potential Watershed Advisory Council members shall be deemed “eligible to serve on the Watershed Advisory Council” if they meet one of the following criteria:

- A federal, state, or local agency active within the Santa Monica Bay watershed
- An incorporated city entirely or partially within the Santa Monica Bay watershed
- A county entirely or partially within the Santa Monica Bay watershed
- A for-profit business that operates entirely or partially within the Santa Monica Bay watershed
- A nonprofit organization that operates entirely or partially within the Santa Monica Bay watershed that is in good standing pursuant to Internal Revenue Code section 501 (c)(3)

(MOU, as amended October 20, 2011, Section III. B., page 7)

The MOU requires a qualified organization to take the following steps toward being nominated and voted onto the WAC:

*Additional entities that would like to become a member of the Watershed Advisory Council and that meet the eligibility criteria shall forward a letter of interest to the Governing Board with a resolution from the interested entity’s governing body (board of directors, etc.) authorizing the entity to seek membership and designating the entity’s representative to the Watershed Advisory*





*Council. The Governing Board may, by majority vote at its next regularly-scheduled meeting, consider election of the requesting entity to the Watershed Advisory Council.*  
(MOU, as amended October 20, 2011, Section III. B., page 6)

Two groups have requested appointment to the WAC based on their qualifications and prior work with the SMBRC.

The Ocean Conservation Society (OCS), a non-profit organization, on studies of marine mammals and birds in the Santa Monica Bay and the Pacific coast, and conducts educational programs leading to protection and conservation of our oceans. . A letter of interest, board resolution, and brief background memo provided by OCS are attached to this report.

The Friends of Ballona Wetlands, a non-profit organization, works to protect and restore the Ballona Wetlands in the Santa Monica Bay watershed. A letter of interest and board resolution for the Friends of Ballona Wetlands are attached.

Both entities meet the eligibility criteria for WAC membership.

**Corporate Resolution of Ocean Conservation Society**

We, the undersigned, being all the directors of this corporation consent and agree that the following corporate resolution was made on September 28, 2011 at 9:30 AM at 309 West San Francisco Street, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

We do hereby consent to the adoption of the following as if it was adopted at a regularly called meeting of the board of directors of this corporation. In accordance with the bylaws of this corporation, by unanimous consent, the board of directors decided that it is resolved, that the corporation shall take all necessary steps to become a member of the Santa Monica Bay Watershed Advisory Council, and that this Board authorizes Executive Director Charles Saylan and/or President Maddalena Bearzi to serve as representative for Ocean Conservation Society.

The officers of this corporation are authorized to perform the acts to carry out this corporate resolution.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles Saylan  
Director

09/28/2011  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Maddalena Bearzi  
Director

09/28/11  
Date

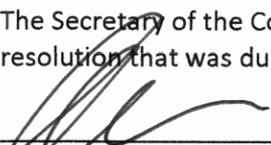
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel T. Blumstein  
Director

9/28/2011 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Berger  
Director

9/28/2011  
Date

The Secretary of the Corporation certifies that the above is a true and correct copy of the resolution that was duly adopted at a meeting of the dated meeting of the board of directors.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles Saylan, Secretary  
Ocean Conservation Society

09/28/2011  
Date



## MEMO FOR CONSIDERATION OF OCS MEMBERSHIP IN THE SM BAY WATERSHED ADVISORY COUNCIL

Ocean Conservation Society (OCS) is a 501 C (3) nonprofit California corporation, organized in 1998 to conduct scientific research and educational projects leading to the protection and conservation of marine ecosystems. For the last 14 years, OCS has carried out marine mammal studies in Santa Monica Bay and the Southern California Bight bringing public awareness on the problems facing these animals and their habitats.

Cetaceans are flagship species meaning conservation measures aimed at mitigating threats to them are expected to result in protection for entire communities of organisms, as well as the ecosystem itself. Over the past decade, has stressed the significance of monitoring cetaceans in Santa Monica Bay, particularly in view of the newly established Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and with the hope of a further expansion of these regions for better protection of cetaceans and other marine species.

Peer-reviewed scientific papers published by OCS staff have proved that Santa Monica Bay is rich in cetaceans, including threatened and endangered species like gray whales and blue whales, which forage in the Bay and within the local coastal MPAs. Upwelling areas near submarine canyons and escarpments in the bay are also foraging hotspots and critical habitats for a variety of cetaceans as well as other species (e.g., seabirds, fish, pinnipeds). Recently, sea otters have been recorded for the first time in the bay in what it seems to be a southern expansion of their regular range.

The Santa Monica Bay coastline also serves as regular transit corridor for the population of inshore bottlenose dolphins. Top predators like coastal bottlenose, which

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are regular inhabitants of the bay and use the area as a foraging region, are now considered worldwide to be key indicators and sentinels of the status and health of coastal habitats. Long-term population monitoring of these dolphins provides a powerful tool for understanding habitat use as well as tracking the progression of poorly understood diseases that may impact both, cetacean and human health. A recent study shows that bottlenose dolphins, living at the top of the food web, accumulate more chemical pollutants in their bodies when they live and feed in waters near urbanized areas. Los Angeles represents the largest urbanized area these animals encounter during their southward and northward near shore movements. Based on a recent scientific study conducted by OCS in the bay, over 80% of bottlenose dolphins were found carrying skin diseases and body malformations. The presence of skin diseases on dolphins, which in recent years is becoming more evident worldwide, appear to be correlated to poor water quality and presence of contaminants.

Monitoring wild cetaceans within the bay ecosystem is also useful for better correlating seasonal blooms to cetacean occurrence, abnormal behaviors (neurological signs are observed in case of intoxication by marine mammals) and potential die-offs. Monitoring cetaceans as sentinels of ecosystem health not only provides data on animal health, but also may shed light on implications to human health as the diseases can be transmitted between marine mammals and humans, as recently pointed out at the 2011 Southern California Marine Mammal Workshop.

Over the years, OCS has followed the work of the SMBRC in the bay, participated in meetings and collaborated with the Commission in a multi-year project on marine mammals in Santa Monica Bay, resulting in several peer-reviewed scientific publications. We strongly believe that our inclusion in the WAC and our long proven experience working with marine mammals will provide a key component that is both essential and absent from current assessments, particularly in the context of the new MPAs established in this area, the anthropogenic issues facing these animals here in the Bay, and the potential effects on human health.

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# Friends of Ballona Wetlands

[www.ballonafriends.org](http://www.ballonafriends.org)

December 8, 2011

Richard Bloom  
Governing Board Chair  
Watershed Advisory Council  
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC)

Via Email

Dear Mr. Bloom,

This letter is to request Friends of Ballona Wetlands (FBW) be considered for nomination for one of the open environmental member positions on the Watershed Advisory Council.

This matter was discussed during our November Board Meeting and the Board authorized by resolution that Friends of Ballona Wetlands seeks membership and designated me, its liaison.

The Friends have partnered with SMBRC on a number of projects:

1. FBW Science Restoration and Education Committee participation with SMBRC
2. Promoting docent participation in SMBRC sponsored BWER baseline studies
3. Collecting data for Roadkill Surveys (being compiled by Karina Johnston)
4. Cross-promotion of joint FBW and SMBRC Open Houses in the Ballona Wetlands
5. Collaboration on Playa Vista Farmer's Market Community Education and Nature Walks

Friends has been working for 33 years to first save and then preserve the degraded remnant (now only 600 acres) of once-abundant coastal wetlands habitat in LA County. One of the goals of FBW is to engage community volunteers in stewardship activities including clean-up, restoration, research, and education. The Friends have crafted year-round education and hands-on restoration programs that bring visitors of all ages to Ballona to learn about wetlands. More than 70,000 volunteers since 1994 have helped the Friends restore eight acres of dune habitat, once overrun with weeds and iceplant, into a blossoming natural ecosystem of dune lupine and other native plant species.

Attached you will find our 501(c)(3) status document as well as a copy of the Board Resolution. We are a non-profit in good standing. Our Federal Tax ID # is 95-3264072.

Thank you for considering our request!

Sincerely,

Lisa Fimiani  
Executive Director

## Board of Directors

Catherine Tyrrell, President  
Dr. David Kay, Vice President  
Jacob Lipa, Secretary  
John Gregory, Treasurer  
Ruth Lansford, Founder  
Micah Ali  
Dr. Pippa Drennan  
Lisa Fimiani  
Susan Gottlieb  
Stephen Groner  
Dr. James Landry  
Dr. Edith Read  
Bob Shanman  
Michael Swimmer  
Richard Wegman

## Emeritus Board

Tim Rudnick  
Ed Tarvyd

Internal Revenue Service  
District Director

Department of the Treasury

Date:

AUG 02 1981

Our Letter Dated:  
December 31, 1981

Person to Contact:  
R. Howard

Contact Telephone Number:  
(213) 688-4170

Friends of Ballona Wetlands  
6953 Trolley Way  
Playa Del Rey, CA 90291

This modifies our letter of the above date in which we stated that you would be treated as an organization which is not a private foundation until the expiration of your advance ruling period.

Based on the information you submitted, we have determined that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, because you are an organization of the type described in section 509(a)(1) and\*. Your exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the code is still in effect.

Grantors and contributors may rely on this determination until the Internal Revenue Service publishes notice to the contrary. However, a grantor or a contributor may not rely on this determination if he or she was in part responsible for, or was aware of, the act or failure to act that resulted in your loss of section 509(a)(1) and\* status, or acquired knowledge that the Internal Revenue Service had given notice that you would be removed from classification as a section 509(a)(1) and\* organization.

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your private foundation status, please keep it in your permanent records.

If you have any questions, please contact the person whose name and telephone number are shown above.

Sincerely yours,

District Director

\*170(b)(1)(A)(vi)

P.O. Box 2350, Los Angeles, Calif. 90053

Letter 1050 (DO) (7-77)



## Friends of Ballona Wetlands

### Resolution of the Board of the Friends of Ballona Wetlands

November 21, 2011

**Be it Resolved That:**

The Board of Directors of the Friends of Ballona Wetlands met at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 21, 2011 and

The Board discussed the Watershed Advisory Council and its roles and responsibilities and

A motion was made by Board Member Susan Gottlieb, seconded by David Kay, and a unanimous vote of the nine board members present approved that the Friends should seek membership on the Watershed Advisory Council.

Signed:

Handwritten signature of Lisa Furiani in cursive script.

Executive Director

Friends of Ballona Wetlands

Handwritten signature of Catherine A. Lynell in cursive script.

President

Friends of Ballona Wetlands



# Friends of Ballona Wetlands

<http://www.ballonafriends.org>

**Contact:**  
Lisa Fimiani  
(310) 306-5994

## **FRIENDS' OVERVIEW**

The Southern California Metropolitan Statistical Area that encompasses Los Angeles has 13 million residents living in the highest density of any urban region (7,068 people/square mile) in the United States. This human-dominated ecosystem is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse, fastest-growing, and most extensively exploited regions of the U.S. It faces extraordinary environmental challenges that range from earthquakes and wildfires, to water shortages and habitat fragmentation. Anthropogenic impacts over the past two hundred years to this Mediterranean-type ecosystem have been extensive, and the region's sub-ecosystems have been severely compromised.

One small watershed in this larger region, the 128-square mile Ballona Creek watershed, is home to the non-profit Friends of Ballona Wetlands, which has been working for thirty-three years to preserve and restore the degraded remnant two percent (now only 600 acres) of once-abundant coastal wetlands. The Ballona Wetlands are remnants of a once-massive wetlands/dune/uplands system that until the early 19th Century covered 2,000 acres. They are the "last stop" for water and water-borne contaminants traveling through stormwater channels from the Ballona Creek watershed before entering Santa Monica Bay. In addition, this wetland ecosystem was once home to communities of indigenous peoples, most importantly the Tongva—also known as the *Gabrielinos*.

The Friends have crafted year-round education and hands-on restoration programs that bring more than 7,000 visitors a year - of all ages - to Ballona to learn about wetlands and the indigenous Tongva culture that once thrived here. We educate about the importance of wetlands as: a rest stop and fueling source for millions of migratory birds; a nursery for young fishes and other local aquatic species; a natural water filtration system, vital for coastal water quality; a source of groundwater recharge; a flood buffer for local communities; home for many plants and animals that could not otherwise survive in Los Angeles; an air purifier and fresh air producer, through the process of photosynthesis in phytoplankton; and, a vital and abundant base of the food chain. We also teach visitors lessons to be learned from a long history of environmental degradation—how increasing urbanization and its attendant pollution threatens wetland functions, and how individual actions from on-site water reclamation at their homes, to

washing cars on the lawn, to picking up after their pets can all have a positive effect on this habitat and local communities. One of our goals is to empower visitors with a list of “best management practices” (BMP’s) they can use at home, school, work and play, to make their watershed cleaner and safer for people and wildlife alike.

Our strong partnership with local Audubon chapters’ docent-led educational programs have - since 1990 - provided hands-on inquiry-based science and ecology education to thousands of middle school children. It is the model and at the heart of what we do. We also partner with other non-profits and organizations such as Heal the Bay, Ballona Creek Renaissance, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, Loyola Marymount University and Playa Vista, in protecting and restoring the Ballona Wetlands. Since 1994, more than 70,000 volunteers have assisted restoring the Ballona Wetlands under the State-designated stewardship of the Friends.

For more information on the State’s future Ballona Wetlands restoration plans, go to the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission website and click on the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project:

<http://www.santamonicabay.org/smbay/ProgramsProjects/HabitatRestorationProject/BallonaWetlandsRestoration/tabid/149/Default.aspx> .

In 2011, after years in the planning stages, Friends of Ballona Wetlands, Loyola Marymount University (LMU) and Playa Vista will see their partnership manifest with the exciting completion of a 1.7 acres park in the community of Playa Vista. With the opening of Ballona Discovery Center, Friends expects to increase the diversity of visitors to the Wetlands while introducing them to open-air science and cultural exhibits available in this new park. The Watershed Walk exhibit, and accompanying programs currently in development by the Friends and Loyola Marymount University, will begin new adventures for people and students of all ages, starting at the trailhead of the Ballona Wetlands in the community of Playa Vista and continuing into the adjacent Riparian Corridor and nearby Ballona Freshwater Marsh. The Friends suite of existing programs in the Saltwater Marsh and Dunes will be enhanced by new partnerships with LMU, the Urban Ecology Institute, and Urban Science Corps. The Friends will expand their Outdoor Environmental Education Program through the new Ballona Discovery Center to reach out into the community and bring in more students from underserved communities and children and adults from organizations with special needs.

For information about the Friends’ programs, please go to our website and download our calendar of community activities: [http://www.ballonafriends.org/visit\\_programs.html](http://www.ballonafriends.org/visit_programs.html).

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